

**104**  
JAN/FEB  
2007

# ACCELERATING MUSIC AND CULTURE

ALTERED STATES

IS RAVE BACK?

KLAXONS

# IS RAVE BACK?

# KLAXONS

# PAPER RAD, AND OTHERS DISCUSS THE RETURN OF PSYCHEDELIA

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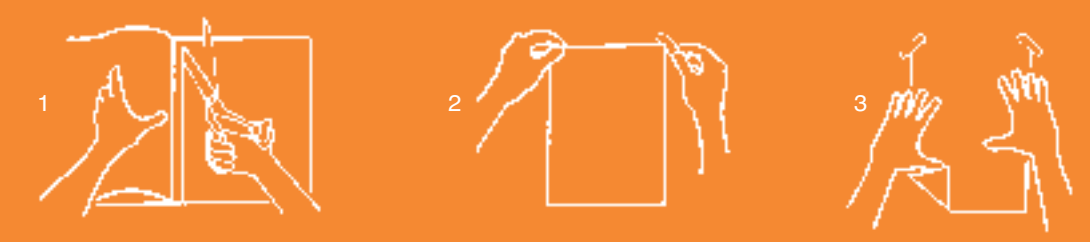
## 电梯警告如果您可以阅

读此信息,就说明您懂中文. 恭喜您! 我们这么做的目的是想让您了解一下第三世界人民在阅读香烟包装上那些他们根本看不懂的语言标识的警告标签时的必然感受. 不过我们认为您懂中文真是太棒了.

## 实际上,我们还稍稍有点羡慕呢.

电梯警告如果您可以阅读此信息,就说明您懂中文. 恭喜您! 我们这么做的目的是想让您了解一下第三世界人民在阅读香烟包装上那些他们根本看不懂的语言标识的警告标签时的必然感受.

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A photograph of three people sitting on a ski lift chair against a backdrop of snow-capped mountains. The person on the left wears a teal jacket and a teal beanie. The person in the middle wears a brown jacket, a black beanie, and green goggles. The person on the right wears a green and black striped jacket, a white beanie, and black goggles. A large, semi-transparent white text overlay reads "dj the mountain". In the bottom left corner, there is a small, dark, semi-transparent graphic overlay featuring a DJ's face and a turntable.

# dj the mountain



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ED'S RANT  
GLOW STUCK?



Rave pandas—an endangered species?

I will not lie. I have been chomping at the bit to address the impending “rave” revival since summer 2006, when I first started hearing retro acid sounds and old-school house samples in records from such diverse sources as Tomas Barfod, Plasticman, and Digitalism. But even though visions of smiley faces danced in *my* head, I didn’t think it was time for them to dance across our cover.

Fast-forward six months and suddenly it seems time. In New York, I’m seeing hipsters sporting glowsticks at all-night dance parties and indie rock kids snapping up old Strictly Rhythm and R&S vinyl at used record stores like Academy Annex and The Thing. With Klaxons covering classic tracks like Kicks Like A Mule’s “The Bouncer” and Grace’s “Not Over Yet” (written by Paul Oakenfold!), not to mention DFA’s remix of Soulwax’s “Another Excuse” alluding liberally to Candi Staton’s acid house favorite “You Got the Love,” I smell a strong whiff of early '90s vibes in the air. (Or maybe that’s the strawberry fog machine my roommate just bought...)

While journalists can be awfully quick to claim there’s a “new rave” movement happening—with British rock mag *NME* going so far as to sponsor an “indie rave” tour in February—we at *XLR8R* are a bit more skeptical. To those of us who spent our formative years in dark, bleep-filled rooms, a rave revival sounds like a cheap attempt (à la electroclash) to cash in on a decade past (engineered by people who had no involvement in the original movement). At worst, “new rave” seems destined to take a snide, ironic look at a culture whose values and idealism we once believed could change the world. Others like dancing all night and listening to fucked-up electronic music, but don’t necessarily want to be lumped in the same category as kids with safety orange UFO pants and pacifiers. Fair enough.

To that end, this issue is designed to explore whether or not rave is back, rather than proclaim that it’s already here. Modern surrealists Paper Rad, who designed the cover, weigh in on the spirit of the movement, as well as *Dungeons & Dragons* and dizzy spells. Also on the cover are Klaxons, a trio of hyper-literate party kids serving up psychedelic punk dance for those who believe the brain and the hips can operate in tandem. And we catch up with longtime dancefloor pleasers like house provocateur Green Velvet and drum & bass scion Marcus Intalex.

As usual, we got more good quotes from these folks than we could possibly fit in the magazine—more from all these interviews will be available at the revamped [www.xlr8r.com](http://www.xlr8r.com), where you will also find daily news updates, a ton of videos, and banging DJ mixes and podcasts from your favorite artists. You’ll also find our contact info online; whether you’re feeling the ecstasy, detesting us for mentioning the word “rave,” or just bored at work, write us and let us know.

- Vivian Host, Editor

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ON THE COVER

Design by Paper Rad, featuring Klaxons





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## LIZ BAGA

Operating as The Goods!, Liz hits thrift stores from Iowa to Miami in search of mint-condition Raiders jackets and '80s pumps to resell. It doesn't hurt that she is the kind of effortlessly stylish person that could make even Zoobas muscle pants look fashionable. Born and bred in the Bay, Liz has been ghost riding the whip and going dumb on dancefloors since 1976, and she frequently travels to NYC, where she styled this issue's fashion shoot.

[www.gottagetthegoods.com](http://www.gottagetthegoods.com)



## ANDREA CASHMAN

Andrea Cashman works at NYC's Deitch Projects, a gallery in SoHo that represents artists Barry McGee, Ryan McGinness, Steve Powers, and Kehinde Wiley. This summer she helped to bring E.V. Day's installation *Bride Fight* to the Lever House and managed the group exhibition *After the Reality*, which featured work by emerging Japanese artists. She has worked on publications including *Vanessa Beecroft: Performances 1993-2003* and Deitch Projects' *Live the Art* due this year.



## JASON LEDER

If you want to know just how long Jason Leder (a.k.a Method One) has been playing with speedy breakbeats and sub-bass, he was once hired to remix Deee-Lite. In 1994. Since then he has played all over the U.S. and Canada, released records on numerous labels, and now pens our drum & bass column, Fast Forward. When he's not tweaking Juno 106 patches, Leder helps run S.F.'s Levitated Recordings and hosts *Vinyl & Circuitry* on [www.bassdrive.com](http://www.bassdrive.com) (Fridays 3-6 p.m. PST).

[www.method-one.com](http://www.method-one.com)



## KEITH YONG

27-year-old Keith Yong moved from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to Manchester, UK in August 2005 to take an audio engineering course, but he now wears many hats: barista, aspiring drum & bass producer/DJ, and photographer (he shot Marcus Intalex this month). Aside from producing local indie bands, his interests include art, independent travel, soccer, and espousing the beauty and greatness of his Malaysian homeland (where, he says, they have the most public holidays of any country in the world).

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Domestic: \$20 (one year, 10 issues) and \$40 (two years, 20 issues);  
Canada: \$40 (one year) and \$80 (two year);

All other international: \$50 (one year) and \$100 (two years).

Subscribe by credit card online ([www.xlr8r.com](http://www.xlr8r.com)) or send payment to XLR8R Subscriptions, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.

Payment made out to "XLR8R Magazine," US funds only.

International orders must be paid by credit card or international money order. Questions? Email [subscribe@xlr8r.com](mailto:subscribe@xlr8r.com) or subscribe online at [www.xlr8r.com](http://www.xlr8r.com).

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The advertisement features three Griffin products against a white background with orange and blue wavy borders. At the top is the iMic, a white circular USB audio interface with 'iMic', 'LINE', 'MIC', 'OUT', and 'IN' labels. Below it is the iKaraoke, which includes a blue iPod with a Griffin iKaraoke dock and a white Griffin iKaraoke microphone. To the right is the iTalk Pro, a black rectangular high-quality stereo microphone for iPods with 'iTalk' branding.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to [letters@xlr8r.com](mailto:letters@xlr8r.com) or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.



November Issue #102



December Issue #103

### City Limits

Hey *XLR8R*

The oddest thing happened to me yesterday. Well, the story goes back a few weeks when I received my 100th issue of *XLR8R*... During the commute, sitting on the train, I leafed through the pages and thought to myself, what a great magazine I have here in my hands. Everything I usually find relevant in life, culture, fashion and, most importantly,

music could be found in my current *XLR8R*, but there was something always missing: in-depth reviews and interviews with the top-quality underground German labels and producers that I have [been] buying my records from on a weekly basis for literally years. I figured you guys would be dedicating an issue to this Teutonic brilliance at some point, and when I got the mail yesterday I wasn't the least bit surprised [after receiving issue #101, Berlin city special]. Thank You!!!  
*Brandt in Chicago, via email*

How's about an *XLR8R* guide to Toronto and Montreal. I can show ya around!  
*PaRiS, via MySpace*

**Ken responds:** Thanks! We may just take you up on that offer for this year's city issue. Stay tuned.

### Pusher Man

The latest issue is fantastic. Kudos on the Squarepusher piece (issue #102). What really sucks is that my local magazine store never put

out the last mag. Oh, I was pissed. It ruined my continuous collection of the greatest music literature in the world.

*1979 Unicycle Grand Prix Winner, via MySpace*

**Bryant responds:** Sorry to hear it. Remember, you can always buy back issues by emailing us at [subscribe@xlr8r.com](mailto:subscribe@xlr8r.com). Don't worry, you won't automatically be subscribed (but you might as well subscribe, right?)—that's just our subscriptions/back issues contact.

**CORRECTIONS:** In issue #103, an uncredited photo of Flosstradamus appeared. It was taken by Vincent Dermody. Also in #103, Marcus Clackson was not credited for the photo of Hot Chip and Theo Jemison was not credited for the photo of Flying Lotus.



## XLR8R'S "CULTURE CLASH" CONTEST

Get cultured with crazy-hot Paper Rad and Factory Records books, and CDs from Klaxons, Busdriver, and Tommy Guerrero.

From Paper Rad's brilliant cover illustration to our Vis-Ed section, this month's issue is packed with some of the most cutting-edge visual art you're likely to come across. For this month's giveaway, you've got a chance to cop a copy of Paper Rad's amazing artist monograph *BJ and da Dogs* and their latest book, *Cartoon Workshop/Pig Tales*, both from our friends at PictureBox Inc. You can also snag Matthew Robertson's book, *Factory Records: The Complete Graphic Album* (Chronicle Books), which features Peter Saville and company's genre-defining cover art for the groundbreaking label. Along with the books, we're lacing some lucky readers with Tommy Guerrero's *From the Soil to the Soul* (Quannum), Klaxons' *Xan Valleys* EP (Modular), and Busdriver's *RoadKill/Overcoat* (Epitaph).

To win, all you've got to do is re-draw us your all-time favorite album cover, on paper or digitally, and send it our way. Artists with the most interesting interpretations will win these fantastic prizes.

**ONE GRAND-PRIZE WINNER RECEIVES:** a copy of *BJ and da Dogs*, *Cartoon Workshop/Pig Tales*, *Factory Records: The Complete Graphic Album*, and each of the CDs listed.

**TWO RUNNERS-UP WILL RECEIVE:** *Factory Records: The Complete Graphic Album* and each of the CDs listed.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email. Entries must be received by February 27, 2007. Send your answers to *XLR8R*'s "Culture Clash" Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "XLR8R's Culture Clash Contest" in the subject line.

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## BITTER BASTARD'S "RAVE TO THE GRAVE"

While digging through the neighbors' trash to find stuff to blackmail them with, BJ "Bitter" Bastard stumbled across the lost city of Atlantis... well, sort of. Actually, it was someone's discarded stash of rave photos. Why anyone would want to throw away this treasure trove of American gold is inconceivable, but luckily they have been rescued here for the sake of fashion inspiration, nostalgia, and—what else?—cheap laughs.



**1.** It's a testament to this dude's styling prowess that he is making glittery, flowered women's pajamas look halfway cool. Hello, TLC?! When I see this shot, all I hear in my head is a loop of a black gay man going, "Work it! Work it! Work it!"

**2.** I believe this guy's name is Jed, which is obviously short for Jedi Knight. Notice how he is sort of broseph/thespian from the neck up, and Oscar the Grouch meets *Star Wars* from the neck down. It's like his hair is listening to Sublime and his legs are listening to Josh Wink.

**3.** Back in the day, everyone had a "rave" name, like Cheshire or Sunshine or Zack-E. I think these guys were called Mr. Owl and Scout. I like Scout's Chiquita hat and China (wtf?) hockey jersey, but their stuffed animals are so half-assed.

**4.** If you're a DJ you should always strive to make people feel like that mushroom is feeling. He must be candy flipping hard because his brim is soooo tilted. (The mushroom, not the DJ.)

**5.** While that one shroom got to hang in the DJ VIP area, the rest of his kin were fenced off in an area guarded by Thing #1 from the Dr. Seuss books. Everyone that thinks raves were all happy fun times never looked at scary killer tree statues while tripping. Most unPLURry.

**6.** Oh my god, where's my friends? I'm tripping balls. Why is that alien frat boy with the pink glasses coming towards me?!?! Oh my god, where's my friends? Aaaahhhhhh!!!

**7.** Oh, the things you can think up if only you try! Crazy cartoon hats modified with smiley face stickers and little sayings, Animaniacs party decorations worn as necklaces, and gigantic Santa Claus suspenders to hold up your phat pants. I wish I could see what homeboy wears now.

**8.** One of this guy's baby cousin is crying right now because he stole her Fozzie doll and Mickey Mouse crib toy to wear to the rave. Also, you'll notice he's borrowed his friend's hat from the previous picture. I wish I were a fly on the wall in the room for that conversation. "Man, you always get to wear the Dr. Seuss hat! C'mon, let me wear it to the Purple Panda Parade. I'll trade you three glow-in-the-dark Femo necklaces and two Superman tabs."

**9.** Before there were logo appropriation tees, there were logo tees worn ironically—and, really, what is funnier than Spam? I like these guys. They have solved the dilemma of their baggies dragging on the ground by chopping them into shorts and the guy on the left knows that wearing mittens helps you rave better. I also like that the guy on the right is pointing to the Spam guy like it's his fault they are both dressed this way. And the Spam guy looks guilty.

**10.** Tie-dye, classic Fresh Jive, massive overalls, speaker-diving, speaker-humping. Sigh. Did it get any better than this?





Custom Made (from left): Element, J Marley, Scoobs, Bluff

# CUSTOM MADE

L.A. HUSTLERS REINVENT THE MIXTAPE MOVEMENT.

**Words** Jesse Serwer **Photo** Zackary Canepari

“We don’t really have a mixtape circuit out here in L.A.,” explains Scoobs, one of the five MCs at the core of Los Angeles rhyme crew Custom Made. “Crenshaw [Boulevard] ain’t like Canal Street where you see all the music that’s out. You basically got to hit all the spots yourself and just broadcast your shit.”

While many non-natives forget that L.A. even has a subway system, Scoobs and Custom Made cohorts Bluff, Element, Sinister Six, and Aneek made their name by turning L.A.’s train and bus lines into a second home, giving their self-financed mixtapes away to anyone who would listen.

“There’s so much animosity and hate here that people ain’t really got that independent hustle,” adds Bluff. “If you talk to somebody on the ‘Shaw and say ‘Here’s my music,’ niggas might rob you. ‘First off, where you from?’ So we just got on the train, mobbing.”

Custom Made was formed after Scoobs, Bluff, Element, and Six met in ciphers at Redondo Union High School in L.A.’s South Bay; Aneek, a New York City native five years their senior, hooked up with the group shortly thereafter. They began work on their first street album, *LA State of Mind*, while most members were still 15. Along the way, the crew, whose addresses are spread across L.A. County, picked up an army of extended family members (MCs Paradox, S-Mak, Lexus, Art-of-Fact; producers Nominz, Infamous K.A.T.s, and Finesse; DJ Cass), blurring the line between five-man rap group and amorphous mixtape movement.

Perhaps it was spending more time in creaky trains than Impalas, but the sound that emerged evokes raw, hungry, Queensbridge murda muzik (think *The Infamous*) more than it does the Death Row hold-overs and Dilated/Jurassic-style backpackers that still dominate L.A.’s rap scene.

“The majority of tracks you hear us on are dark, grimy, and gutter, [things] you can tell a story over,” says Scoobs. “That’s what gets us hype. You never heard West Coast dudes rap on shit like that. Everybody thinks we’re from N.Y., [but] we’re rapping the only way we know.”

After moving an estimated 100,000 units of their six street albums, C Made’s hustle caught the attention of New York’s Babygrande Records, who immediately dropped the *Sidewalk Mindtalk: The Best of the Custom Made Mixtapes* CD/DVD as a lead-in to their upcoming label debut, *Fresh Out*. Judging from some early tracks, *Fresh Out* preserves the formula found on street albums like *Street Cinema Vol. 3: The Blackboard Jungle*, with more dark, cinematic beats and half-out-of-breath stories about being young in L.A.

“It’s kind of a concept album,” Scoobs says. “We just signed, so it’s like we’re fresh to the game. Six just got out of jail, so he’s fresh out of there. The album actually starts with Six getting out. Everything on it is all real life. Every story that we tell you is 100% fact—no lies.”

Custom Made’s *Sidewalk Mindtalk: The Best of the Custom Made Mixtapes* is out now on

Babygrande. Their debut LP, *Fresh Out* (Babygrande), will be out in spring 2007.

[www.custommadehiphop.com](http://www.custommadehiphop.com), [www.babygrande.com](http://www.babygrande.com)





## ROCKING STEADY

Detroit guitar hero Christopher Fachini reinvents the classic reggae soundsystem.

On October 26, 2006, Detroit's newest contemporary art museum, MOCAD, opened its doors to the public with a show called *Meditations in an Emergency*. The most compelling part of the exhibition was not Roxy Paine's blob-making or Barry McGee's and Amaze's 30-foot high graffiti pieces—it was a one-man 1960s-style reggae soundsystem.

Inspired by Black Uhuru, early Upsetters records, and local radio, Detroit native Christopher Fachini (a former guitarist in The Dirtbombs and a current member of the Odu Afrobeat Orchestra) has spent the last seven years painstakingly putting together the soundsystem, which he calls The Mental Machine. The hub is the "Cassette Pet," a mixer that Fachini uses to DJ cassettes of instrumental dub and rocksteady jams that he has written and recorded entirely by himself, playing all the instruments (organ, bass, percussion, etc.) on all the tracks. The sound plays through various amps and speaker stacks, one made entirely from rewired, fully functional boomboxes. All of the equipment is painted in the Jamaican style; Fachini even dresses not

unlike Lee "Scratch" Perry when he plays.

"Reggae helped empower the people in Jamaica's ghettos in the 1960s," says exhibition curator Klaus Kertess. "Chris' brilliant riffs on reggae carry on the possibility of liberation—if now in a more metaphorical sense than in the '60s in Jamaica."

Fachini is too wrapped up in mixing down the tracks for a forthcoming *The Mental Machine* album to be pondering the deeper significance of his pet project; nonetheless, he seems psyched to have his labor of love considered "art." "I don't even understand what I'm doing," he says, when asked about the reaction of the MOCAD crowd to his performance. "But being in the museum has opened my eyes to a depth and a meaning in the piece that is, in a way, new even to me."

Dusty Saguaro  
[www.mocadetroit.org](http://www.mocadetroit.org)

Christopher Fachini operates his "Cassette Pet" (part of The Mental Machine), which plays through his hand-built boombox sculpture, "Crispy's Rockbox."  
Photo courtesy of MOCAD





IMAGE FACTORY

A new tome explores the powerful aesthetic of Manchester's Factory Records.

There's been much attention paid to album art in the last year or so, with digital downloads threatening to kill (or at least dilute) the form altogether. Applications like Cover Flow only take one so far into the abstract minds of designers whose work, at least back in the days of Factory Records' genesis, was considered as integral to the Joy Division experience as Ian Curtis' otherworldly yelps. Matthew Robertson's beautiful **Factory Records: The Complete Graphic Album** (hardcover/paperback; Chronicle Books, \$60/\$35) is a 500-image, 224-page book that looks less at the label's musical influence (which included early New Order singles and building Manchester's fêted Hacienda club), and more at the indelible mark head designer Peter Saville left on the visual-arts community. Saville and company's creative style came to define both the post-punk and early rave scenes—minimal and streamlined in its design yet weighty in its impact. But perhaps even more interesting than the countless album covers and flyer images found within is the explanation of what informed Saville's artistic perspective, outlined here in stunning detail. *Ken Taylor*  
[www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com)



Album art from Matthew Roberston's *Factory Records: The Complete Graphic Album* (clockwise from top): Happy Mondays' *Pills 'N' Thrills and Bellyaches* (1990), designed by Central Station Design; Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart" 12-inch single (1980), designed by Peter Saville; A Certain Ratio's *The Graveyard and The Ballroom* (1979), designed by Peter Saville.

MACROMANTICS

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST HIP-HOP EXPORTS SOAKS UP THE COSMOS.

*Words* Max Herman *Photo* Mia Mala McDonald

Aussie MC Romy Hoffman has a lot on her mind, which quickly becomes clear when listening to her full-length debut as Macromantics. On *Moments in Movement*, her train of thought runs wild, whether she's spitting with bizarre braggadocio or melancholy introspection. Lines like "Everyone's just trying to jump on the bandwagon/But I'm just chasing the back of a damn dragon" (from "Bandwagon") show this up-and-comer is as in touch with fantasy as she is reality.

"My thoughts are all scattered and cluttered," Hoffman explains of her abnormal lyrical approach. "I go on tangents and I wanna talk about myself and philosophy and how I fit into the world at large and the cosmos and chaos. And you're allowed to do that in hip-hop. It's a really post-modern form of writing."

Rhyming wasn't always Miss Macro's chosen form of expression. Originally a guitarist, she made a name for herself in the mid-'90s by playing with Ben Lee's now disbanded pop-punk band Noise Addict. While touring with Noise Addict in America, then-15-year-old Hoffman discovered and fell in love with hip-hop.

"Everyone's voice is important and should be heard, and that's what really spoke to me about hip-hop," says Hoffman. "It was saying something about society and culture and blending thoughts about self and philosophy and politics. It became a genre of music and a genre of writing that I found to be perfect to get my voice across."

Hoffman started sharpening her rhymes, but opportunities for MCs in the Land Down Under were scarce. Thus, in the early 2000s, she moved to America to record, and found no shortage of inspiration. As the war in Iraq began to spin out of control, she recorded *Hyperbolic Logic*, an EP full of dark, stream-of-consciousness rhymes ignited by the climate in the U.S. "I was kind of overwhelmed," she admits.

*Moments in Movement* was recorded back in Australia, and it finds Hoffman lightening things up a bit with catchier songs (such as the progressive "Scorch") and genre-bending producer Tony Buchen (a.k.a. Buchman) behind the boards. That's not to say that this album is less socially conscious—all of Hoffman's life experiences are reflected in her imaginative freestyles.

"The way stars twinkle at night is going to affect my writing as much as who gets into power next and what happens in Iraq," she says. "I feel what I do is journalism—I'm commenting on all of that stuff."

*Moments In Movement* is out January 23rd on Kill Rock Stars.  
[www.macromantics.com](http://www.macromantics.com), [www.killrockstars.com](http://www.killrockstars.com)





It is no coincidence.

WHEN HE WAS TWELVE,  
HE SINGED OFF HIS EYEBROWS  
IN A CHEMISTRY EXPERIMENT.

// Scion Profile 437chm



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what moves you



CITY WISE:  
TOMMY GUERRERO'S FAVORITE S.F. SPOTS

Tommy Guerrero is the kind of guy I'd want to be if I was a dude. A big claim, yes. But, please. He's had a successful career as a professional skater, plus he's a multi-instrumentalist and graphic designer. In addition to his job at Deluxe Skateboards, where he art directs Mark Gonzales' 'Krooked line, he just released his fourth LP and is currently working on an original score for EA Games. Despite all this, Tommy G is as down-to-earth, mellow, and good-humored as his music would lead you to believe, as I found out when Guerrero—born and bred in San Francisco—took me on this tour of his favorite haunts in the sleepy little city by the Bay. *Brianna Pope*  
Tommy Guerrero's *From the Soil to the Soul* is out now on Quannum.  
[www.tommyguerrero.com](http://www.tommyguerrero.com), [www.quannum.com](http://www.quannum.com)



**CLARION MUSIC (816 SACRAMENTO ST.):** Our first stop was this Chinatown joint that stocks exotic percussion instruments. Tommy was like Wayne Campbell in Guitar Center. He tried to downplay his skill on percussion, but he was getting funky sounds out of everything he touched. He plays all his own instruments on his albums and uses digital samples only in rare instances (and when he does, they're "very obscure and heavily edited"). His slat drum and favorite shaker are both from Clarion.  
[www.clarionmusic.com](http://www.clarionmusic.com)



**101 MUSIC (1414 GRANT AVE.):** A life-long resident of San Francisco, Tommy's bound to run into old buddies when he's out. Sure enough, the guy behind the counter at 101 Music had to bequeath the "homie" discount on a 1972 album by Dakilla, a six-piece funk band who Tommy accurately described as a "Filipino Santana."



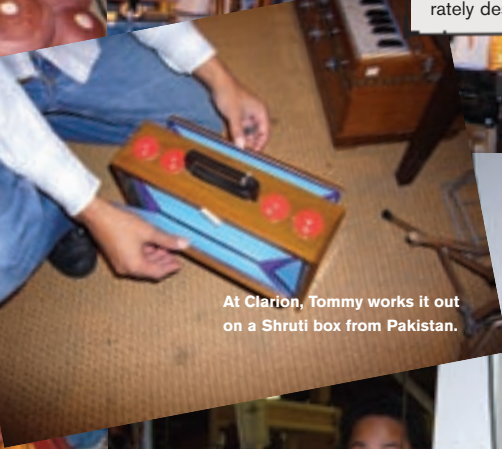
**MARIO'S BOHEMIAN CIGAR STORE CAFE (566 COLUMBUS AVE.):** This pizzeria is a two-minute skateboard ride from 101 Music, so it's a perfect stop for Tommy after a hard day of looking through records. His favorite is the margherita pizza and a glass of the house red, a lovely Montepulciano.  
[www.mariosbohemiancigarstore.com](http://www.mariosbohemiancigarstore.com)



**LI PO COCKTAIL LOUNGE (916 GRANT AVE.):** Clarion was a bit overwhelming, so we chilled out with a cold Tsingtao at Tommy's favorite Chinatown bar, the Li Po Lounge. The Buddha shrine behind the register fed us positive vibes while we chatted about how he learned the hard way that retaining publishing rights is crucial to a musician's livelihood.



Tommy bought a little animal-shaped instrument off this table for his two-year-old son, Diego.



At Clarion, Tommy works it out on a Shruti box from Pakistan.



I believe his exact words were, "Freaky Deaky, get a shot of that!"

And he stopped here to make some very impressive multi-octave cat sounds.



**S.F. ANTIQUES & DESIGN MALL (701 BAYSHORE BLVD.):** Our last stop was by far the most intense. This 37,000 square-foot building houses over 200 booths for individual antique dealers. Some of the booths are corny (umm, shabby chic?), but the good ones are amazing. Of course, Tommy's got very discriminating taste, so he headed straight for his favorite modern design experts and—you guessed it—record collectors.  
[www.sfantique.com](http://www.sfantique.com)



Hey buddy, there's only room for one stud in this antiques mall.



Are there words for this?



**BUILDING RESOURCES (701 AMADOR ST.):** How he managed to find records at a salvage yard, I will never know. But, as he says, he's "always lookin' for somethin'"... and it usually involves vinyl. This old-fashioned junkyard is the "monkey wrench" in Tommy's arsenal of dope S.F. destinations.  
[www.buildingresources.org](http://www.buildingresources.org)

Tommy G is such a nice dude. He actually found this book for himself, then let me buy it when I whined. I paid \$1.



Tommy daydreams of all the coiffure that could be.



Umm, Tommy, we can see you.



Has he found the studio desk he's been looking for?



Now we know how he keeps those curls so shiny and bouncy.



Tommy was eyeballing this modernist stereo, but he got distracted by a bin of vinyl.



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and Green Acres hat (\$35)  
www.goorin.com



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www.hamburgereyes.com



Vans Vault Josh Petherick slip-on (\$50)  
vault.vans.com



Pare Mushroom Wonderland  
and Bat umbrellas (\$85)  
www.pareumbrella.com





# BOLE 2 HARLEM

FROM ETHIOPIA TO NEW YORK CITY AND BACK AGAIN.

Words **Justin Hopper** Illustration **Paul Darragh**

Haile Selassie—the long-reigning Ethiopian king and, to Jamaican Rastafarians, incarnation of God on Earth—stared down at David Schommer from the walls of his childhood home. In his youth, Schommer would leave his mandatory piano and dance lessons at the local community center and sneak into an upstairs room to learn hand drumming from a Guinean teacher. But while Africa, and Ethiopia in particular, was close to his family’s heart, it was far from their home in the collegiate Chicago suburb of Evanston, IL.

“It always seemed natural for me to learn African drums [and] African dance,” says Schommer. “My father lived in Ethiopia from 1950 to 1958, and helped found the first university in Addis Ababa. He had a great life experience there, and I grew up with those stories.”

Schommer has spent his life as a professional musician, going from pit orchestras and the cast of *Stomp* to drum & bass productions as Duke Mushroom to writing, producing, and engineering for a string of major-label artists. But with the release of *Bole 2 Harlem*—a Schommer-produced collaboration between Ethiopian and American rappers, instrumentalists, and singers—Schommer has made his own contribution to Ethiopian culture—one that you can hear any night of the week, blasting from the taxi cabs of Addis Ababa.

“There’s probably about 100,000 taxi drivers in Addis Ababa,” says Schommer, “and [the album is] popular with them. They don’t exactly have [Neilsen] SoundScan over there, but I guess it’s sold well—on cassette, of course!”

*Bole 2 Harlem* isn’t exactly a mainstream American recording. The Amharic lyrics (by rapper Maki Siraj) and titles, the wild plucking of Balla Tounkara’s *kora*, and the wailing and undulating vocals of Tigist Shibabaw make *Bole 2 Harlem* distinctively African, even as its hip-hop, funk, and electro beats audibly link the disc to New York City.

*Bole 2 Harlem* can partially thank some strange bedfellows for its existence—it was productions for artists such as Carole King and the Baha Men that gave Schommer the financial independence to turn his Harlem studio into a cross-cultural stomping ground. “When I was doing the major label thing, I’d get new artists through every day,” he says. “Labels would say, ‘There’s this girl, just like Christina Aguilera, but she’s only 14! We’ve got a 10-million-dollar- and 19-year development contract, but we want her to write.’ We’d end up writing the songs for her, because what the hell does she know about suffering, struggle, and rejoicing—the things I think songs are about?”

On *Bole 2 Harlem*, the artists “know who they are,” says Schommer. Songs such as “Amet Bale,” which simply describes a man borrowing his brother’s clothes and car for a night out, offers a grounded worldview not found too often in popular music. “We wanted the perspective to be from [regular] people,” says Schommer. “If you point out that everyday experiences are valuable and poignant, it might be as small as a dragonfly landing on a pond, but that ripple effect is there.”

*Bole 2 Harlem Volume 1* (Sounds of the Mushroom) is out now. [www.bole2harlem.com](http://www.bole2harlem.com)



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Tyree Colion



Ogun



Mullyman



Diablo

## THOSE OTHER BMORE BREAKS

The *Hamsterdam* mixtapes give Harm City hip-hop MCs their shine.

Spurred by HBO's *The Wire* and the city's unique strain of club music, Baltimore has become a subject of cultural curiosity lately. Ensuring that the city's long-overlooked hip-hop scene wasn't left out of the equation, Juan Donovan Bell and Jamal Roberts of Darkroom Productions recruited the cream of the local rap crop for *Hamsterdam*, a 2005 release that was equal parts mixtape, local pride booster, and showcase for the duo's moody production style. Named for the drug strip depicted in *The Wire*, *Hamsterdam* surpassed all expectations, landing the previously obscure producers a gig making music for the TV series (and a front-page article in the *New York Times* Arts section). With *Hamsterdam 2: From the Stash to the Strip* and its companion DVD, *Harm City Exposed*, hitting streets in time for '07, this could be the year Avon Barksdale's hometown takes over the rap game. Here's a look at Baltimore's top MCs, as featured on *Hamsterdam 2*. Jesse Serwer [www.darkroominc.com](http://www.darkroominc.com)

### DIABLO

Diablo is the series' breakout star thanks to "Jail Flick," a Bmore club-paced anthem about sending pictures home from jail ("A topic everyone in the hood can relate to," notes Bell). Diablo's turns on *Hamsterdam*, like "Jumping Like Rope" (in which he cites George W. Bush's stolen elections as justification for selling dope) and "Beautiful Bitches in Bad Neighborhoods," are equally energetic. Bell and Roberts are currently meeting with labels interested in signing Diablo and Darkroom Productions to a joint artist/production deal. [www.myspace.com/diabloflames](http://www.myspace.com/diabloflames)

### TYREE COLION

Incarcerated for murder between the ages of 15 and 26, Tyree Colion was on the streets for less than two years before a parole violation sent him back to prison—but not before dropping two double-disc mixtapes (*The Problem* and *The Solution*) and a triple-disc (the 60-track *Hustle Hard Blvd.*). In that brief period, Colion created a street buzz previously unheard of in Baltimore, Bell says. "It was like 2-Pac, the way he made such an impact so quickly." *Hamsterdam 2*'s "Projects" and "Blocka Blocka," recorded days before his sentencing, are sure to be Harm City's next anthems. [www.rareent.com](http://www.rareent.com)

### MULLYMAN

Having rhymed alongside Clipse, Freeway, and Memphis Bleek, and on Clinton Sparks and Kay Slay mixtapes, Mullyman was one of a handful of local MCs with a national profile pre-dating *Hamsterdam*. The Bodymore soldier recently followed up his slept-on 2005 debut LP, *Mullymania* (Major League Unlimited), with a new street album, *Still H.I.M.* "Get Ready" (off *Hamsterdam 2*) and *Still H.I.M.*'s "The Life, the Hood, the Streetz" both appear in season four of *The Wire*. [www.mullymania.com](http://www.mullymania.com)

### OGUN

Named for the Yoruba spirit of iron and energy, Ogun is a member of the long running Real on Purpose (ROP) crew. A social worker by day, his contribution to *Hamsterdam 2*—the succinctly titled "Baltimore"—addresses his hood's impending gentrification ("They move the blacks to the county on some reconstruction/Say everywhere we go all we bring is destruction"). "When we got the idea to do *Hamsterdam*, he was the first person I called," says Bell. "He didn't know Darkroom but he was feeling the vision—this Baltimore thing is deeper than music for him." [www.its-ogun.com](http://www.its-ogun.com)

## PROMOE

A SWEDISH ICONOCLAST TACKLES THE *WHITE MAN'S BURDEN*.

Words Sarah Bentley Photo Daniel Pederson

Swedish rapper Promoe's new album mixes learned social lyricism with party vibes, a slew of quality international guests... and a whole heap of hair.

"I made a vow never to cut my hair," says Promoe (born Mårten Edh). "Not because of anything to do with Rastafari, but as a way of rebelling against society. At college I noticed you had to look a certain way to be accepted and seen as cool. I wanted to say 'Fuck that.'"

Promoe's conscious "fuck that" attitude has manifested itself in many more ways than just the unruly mass of thick dreadlocks that cascades from his head to his chin. As a youth he was part of graffiti crew Babylon's Falling; "My tag was SHIT," he recounts. He's a vegan. "Not because I disagree with killing to eat, that's natural," he says. "It's the meat and dairy industries I disagree with." And his latest album—a choice amalgam of hip-hop flow, reggae beats, and dancehall chat—is bravely titled *White Man's Burden*.

"I've had it in my head for years but no one else I worked with was into it before," he explains of the title. "For me, it sums up so much with what's wrong with today's society."

Explaining such a weighty issue is not an easy task, but a necessary one. "I'm not saying white people are responsible for their ancestors' actions," Promoe begins. "But I *am* saying the negative repercussions of the slave trade are still being felt today. Not only that but I'm referring to the ruthless nature of global capitalism, corrupt politics, and the continuing destruction of the environment for monetary gain."

He pauses, mentally arranging his next point. "I mean, look at Sweden, a country that's supposedly a social model. Try applying for a job with an Islamic or African name in Sweden; then see what kind of social model it really is."

Defying the intrinsically heavy nature of the issues that occupy his mind, Promoe's music is far from hard work to listen to. He delivers his gripes over accessible uptempo beats and boasts simple, clever, and almost poppy turns of phrase; you may even find yourself merrily singing along to lyrics about fatal anorexia, colonial heritage, and confused identities.

Four of the tracks feature killer vocal takes from Jamaican reggae/dancehall artists—Capleton appears on "Songs of Joy," Assassin on "Time Travellin'," Daville on "In the Morning," and Kardinal Offishall on "Trapped."

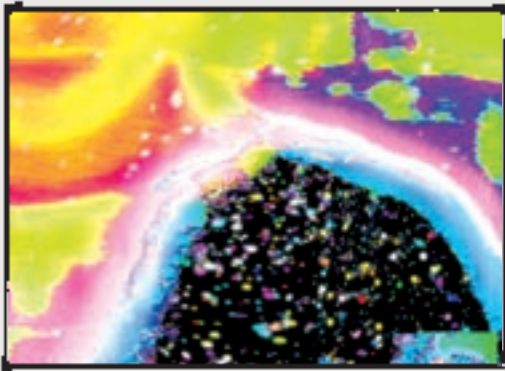
"I felt much more confident recording Jamaican artists for this album," confesses Promoe. "I used to let them just do their thing, but for *White Man's Burden* I directed them. I was in the studio with Capleton for ages and we were getting nowhere. I asked him if he really wanted to do it. I think I offended him but the next cut he gave me was amazing so it was worth it."

Promoe's *White Man's Burden* is out now on David Vs Goliath. [www.promoe.nu](http://www.promoe.nu)



A/V CLUB

Three new DVDs reach inside your retina.



WORLD IS SO BEAUTIFUL

Takagi Masakatsu's *World Is So Beautiful* (Carpark Records; \$15.98) is an ode to the beauty of the world in 10 parts. Originally conceived as a collaboration between the artist and retailer agnès b., its short vignettes use original music and footage from all over the globe to create a colorful, ambient-pop landscape, worthy of any great psychedelic trip. Masakatsu's subjects tend to be children, whether we hear them ("Festival in a Forest") or see them ("Rama"). What's so edgy about that? Though his subject seems safe, the artist makes these images into a kaleidoscope of color and sound that forces you to see the everyday through the eyes of a child. This turns reality into a canvas, as if there is no point at which the world ends and art begins. The world *is* so beautiful, as long as we keep viewing it through Masakatsu's eyes. *Trinity Toft*  
[www.carparkrecords.com](http://www.carparkrecords.com)



BEAT KINGS: THE HISTORY OF HIP HOP

Though its title would suggest otherwise, *Beat Kings: The History of Hip Hop* (Nature Sounds, \$15.95) doesn't exactly deliver a history of hip-hop. What it does contain are some great interviews with hip-hop's A-list producers—Premier, Pete Rock, RZA, Just Blaze, and more—presented by Wu-Tang Clan DJ/producer Mathematics. Gold-grilled and elusive, Math mainly stays behind the camera, posing questions on everything you wanted to know about hip-hop. You wanna know Primo or Prince Paul's thoughts on the rap game? You wanna know how much money Swizz Beatz got for his first beat, and you want to see what car he drives (which he sits in during the whole interview)? You want to watch Kanye West spout some more crazy shit? Then, my hip-hop-obsessed friend, this ready-for-MTV documentary is for you. *Patrick Rood*  
[www.nature-sounds.net](http://www.nature-sounds.net)



THE VICE GUIDE TO TRAVEL

*Vice Magazine's* first official DVD, *The Vice Guide To Travel* (Vice; \$20), takes you to areas of the world you'd never have the balls to go yourself. Watch *Vice* founder Suroosh Alvi, skater Chris Pastras, and comedian David Cross (among others) break down hard-hitting stories and investigate urban legends; segments include a search for the last dinosaur in the Congo, attempts to buy nuclear weapons in Bulgaria, a mission to hunt five-eyed boars and seven-armed bears in Chernobyl, and an "exposé" on the undercover armed-weapons trade in Pakistan. It even features cameos from Spike Jonze and Johnny Knoxville. Ohhhhh snap, you know *those* dudes are crazy! Like its parent magazine, the DVD is at turns informative and exploitative. Still, it's definitely worth seeing; if not for its unique footage, quality editing, and amazing soundtrack, then to have something to talk about at the next hipster soiree. *Patrick Rood*  
[www.vice.com](http://www.vice.com)



DEXPLICIT

A HIP-HOP  
WUNDERKIND  
HONES HIS BASS-IC  
INSTINCTS.

*Words Robbie Mackey*

In September 2005, Jay-Z became the first rap artist to perform at London's stodgy Royal Albert Hall, causing young 'uns raised on pirate radio and bashment beats to pay close attention. About halfway through the night they were rewarded, as Memphis Bleek and Hov delivered the springy verses of "Is That Your Chick" over the craggy terrain of Lethal B's "Pow." It was an important moment for cross-pond hip-hop: The best in the game invaded the old folks' home and spit lyrics over a homegrown grime instrumental.

The man responsible for "Pow"'s demanding beat is 22-year-old North London whiz kid Dexplicit. The son of a reggae lover, he spent his childhood watching his dad cut tracks in his home studio. This sparked an interest in the nuts-and-bolts side of music-making—before Dex could even grow a mustache, he was parked in front of a computer, slaving away at rudimentary electronic beats. By the age of 15, he was sending material to heavy-hitting pirates like Heat FM, where MC Slick D would deliver entire sets over his big, angry basslines and lightning-quick breaks.

"It doesn't bother me at all when people talk about my age," says Dex. "I'm very proud of achieving what I have so far."

As well he should be. In a few short years, he's put a unique stamp on his music. By pushing average hip-

hop to warp speeds, tossing in enormous, growling basslines and exploiting the bass-driven energy and propulsive, kick-heavy relentlessness of 4/4 garage house, Dexplicit has created a distinctive sound, exciting even the UKG naysayers who've been bemoaning the genre's death before it even started. His dance-floor-ready jams have made him one of the most sought-after producers in the "UK urban" scene—he's worked extensively with UK pop acts like NaNa and Maxwell D while releasing underground bangers on his DXP Recordings label. Now, his star is starting to rise in America, thanks to recent remixes of Dipset and M.I.A. "I want to build an empire," says Dex. "I want [the Dexplicit] brand to be well known throughout the globe, like Aftermath or Def Jam."

With his *Melodic Energy Vol. 1* mixtape flying off shelves, a new NaNa record in the queue, and a remix of Dem Franchise Boys' "I Think They Like Me" forthcoming on Virgin UK, that doesn't seem so unlikely. When Dexplicit says he'll achieve an unthinkable amount by the time he's 25, it doesn't come off as wishful thinking—it sounds like a promise.

[www.dxprecordings.com](http://www.dxprecordings.com)





## GOOD STUFF

A few of Leilow's favorite things.

Though all the streetwear hype seems to come from London, Japan, and New York, there's dopeness slowly bubbling up from the Aloha State. Not only is Honolulu, HI a bad-ass beach town (and a hugely popular vacation spot for the Japanese), but it also boasts a righteous sneaker store (Kicks Hawaii) and its own t-shirt mafia, including brands In4mation, Bittersweet, and Leilow. Leilow, which presents modern riffs on classic Hawaiian themes (tiki heads, palm fronds, '60s surf fonts), is the brainchild of Jules Gayton, who lived in London and New York before moving to paradise in 2001. Gayton loves Hawaiian culture, counting surfing godfather Duke Kahanamoku among his heroes, and singing the praises of vintage 1940s Aloha shirt designs and kalua pork ("Gotta have pork on my fork!" he raves.) We tracked him down after a long day on Waikiki Beach and asked him about his prize possessions. *Tyra Bangs*  
[www.leilow.com](http://www.leilow.com)

### 1. CAN DVD (\$22.98)

Can is one of my all time favorite bands and probably one of the most influential groups ever. They blended many styles of music, from funk, jazz, and pop to avant-garde experimentations. The DVD (released by Mute Records) is essential viewing for any music fan. It's filled with amazing live performances, interviews, and a thorough documentary on the group's history. You'll have to dig for the vinyl, though.  
[www.muterecords.com](http://www.muterecords.com)

### 2. VINTAGE CARTIER AVIATOR SUNGLASSES (PRICELESS)

In Hawaii, sunglasses are a must-have accessory as it's sunny all year round. These vintage Cartier frames are a classic '70s model that

never goes out of style. I've customized the lenses and even had some of the frames custom-colored. What can I say? I'm obsessive. These are quite hard to find, but you may luck out at a flea market or yard sale.

### 3. JUN TAKAHASHI & MADSAKI PRINT (PRICELESS)

Jun Takahashi and Madsaki are two of the most talented people I know. This print is an artist's proof from their *Intermission* art show in 2004. The show was very surreal—dark and beautiful at the same time. I look at this piece everyday and find new and interesting things that I've never seen before. Takahashi (who designs the Undercover line) also recently guest curated an issue of Belgium fashion tome *A Magazine*.



## SOMEWHERE: STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Sweden's capital spawns a new kind of Northern soul... soulful hip-hop, that is.

Neither Arctic chill nor a buttoned-down reputation has kept a healthy homegrown hip-hop scene from taking root in Stockholm. The capital city teems with record stores, where you can pick up the latest from local labels like JuJu Records, DvsG (David vs. Goliath), and Raw Fusion, which has successfully exported beat-makers like Up Hygh and Freddie Cruger to the US. Numerous American acts have performed here, especially at now-defunct clubs like Fatmilk and the Jump-Off. You can even check out the "hip-hop school" in the suburb of Farsa, where students learn breakdancing and beat-making.

Sweden's first hip-hop records were reputedly released in the mid-'80s, adapting American style and slang and setting a template for the genre's development. Artists rapped predominantly in English until the early '90s—spurred on by a long-running hip-hop video program called *1200*—until The Latin Kings (TLK), a group of Venezuelan and Chilean immigrants from the Stockholm suburb of Botkyrka, started spitting in Swedish, recording their hit album, *Välkommen Till Förorten* (*Welcome to the Suburbs*), in a slang dialect known as *Rinkeby* (named after the highly African-populated suburb of the same name). Stockholm hip-hop names like ADL and Petter followed suit; the latter's 1999 album, *Mitt Sjätte Sinne* (*My Sixth Sense*), helping to usher in a huge expansion in the country's hip-hop community. Now, rappers like **Ison & Fille** and Promoe and producers like Drumz, DJ Large, Embee, Breakmechanix, and **Soul Supreme** are redefining Swedish hip-hop.



Besides Stockholm, the cities of Gothenburg and Malmö both have sizable scenes, but despite differences in dialect, each region doesn't have a signature sound. "There aren't huge divides in styles," says Aaron Phiri of the duo **Hearin' Aid**, which puts out soulful beats with a dirty J Dilla edge to them. "You get your Swedish East Coast right next to your Swedish Dirty South right next to your Swedish Detroit!"

Hip-hop encourages a blunt form of proletariat journalism, and Swedish rap is no exception. **Timbuktu**—whose reggae-tinged *Alla Vill Till Himmelen* (*Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven*) was a huge hit in '05—explains that social changes over the last 20 years have given kids plenty of material. As the right-wing government increasingly deconstructs educational and welfare systems, and immigrants continue to arrive from Middle East, Somalia, and Eastern Europe, previously unknown race and class issues have come to the forefront of Swedish culture.

"You can see lots of social tension and class differences," says Timbuktu. "It's a microcosm of the U.S. and England. You can see how poor people end up in high-rise buildings, called *förort*, outside of the city core."

Despite language and cultural barriers, hip-hop's promise of giving a voice to the disenfranchised still translates in Sweden. And hell, Swedes love to *tugga* ("chill"), *kicka* ("smoke"), and *gendish* ("get drunk") as much as anybody else. *Patrick Sisson*

Stockholm's secret weapons (clockwise from top left): Ison & Fille under the Sankt Erik Bridge, inner city Stockholm (photo by Andreas Lönngren and Jonas Husbom), Soul Supreme, Timbuktu, and Hearin' Aid

## YOU BETTA ASK SOMEBODY

XLR8R asks: "If you could travel back in time, where would you go?"



### ADEM

"I would travel to a time not too long ago and whisper in the ear of someone dear, 'Don't do it; I promise it'll be okay.' They probably wouldn't listen to me, but at least I would have tried."  
*Adem's Love and Other Planets* (Domino) is out now.  
[www.adem.tv](http://www.adem.tv), [www.dominorecordco.com](http://www.dominorecordco.com)



### JIBZ CAMERON OF DYNASTY HANDBAG

"I would want to be a gentle, plant-eating dinosaur—but a big one so that I would not get eaten, and be able to observe the prehistoric wonders in peace."  
*Dynasty Handbag's Foo Foo Yik Yik* (Lovepump United) is out now. [www.dynastyhandbag.com](http://www.dynastyhandbag.com)



### ALEX SMOKE

"I'd go to the Richmond swimming pool in London in 1984 and tie up my swimming trunks better. Would be one less painful memory and the knock-on effects could be limitless, both for me and the witnesses."  
*Alex Smoke's Paradolia* (Soma) is out now.  
[www.somarecords.com](http://www.somarecords.com)



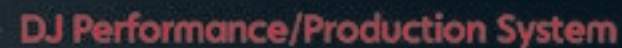


News and gossip  
from the  
music world

for the **Plug Independent Music Awards** will be held February 10 at New York City's Irving Plaza. • Hipster barbershops and nail salons are the new trend in NYC's Lower East Side neighborhood, with street culture rag *Frank151* opening **Frank's Chop Shop**, trendy restaurant Freeman's opening **Freeman's Sporting Club**, and the recent launch of a shop/nail salon called *Valley*. • The Saddle Creek label has cool new videos up from their bands, including clips from **Now It's Overhead, To the Races, and Heavy Hands**; they've also made *Cursive's "Bad Sects"* (from their recent *Happy Hollow* release) available for anyone to remix. Visit [www.saddlecreek.com](http://www.saddlecreek.com) and [www.badsects.com](http://www.badsects.com), respectively. • Billed as "the hardcore gamer's fantasy," *Nerdcore 2007* is a 12-month calendar featuring naked chicks posing with Nintendo Game Boys and arcade



1. Cursive
2. *Nerdcare* calendar
3. Danielson Famile
4. Antibalas
5. Frank's Chop Shop
6. Michael Franti
7. Bloc Party

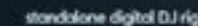


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- integrated hardware/software system > **effortless setup and ultra-stable performance**
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- organizes digital audio files (including iTunes) into easily searchable database > **access your entire digital library**
- supports optional third-party VST effects > **add your own signature sound**
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- use with computer alone or add effects to vinyl/CDs > **total flexibility**



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M-AUDIO





# HYPER HYPER

SEIZURE-INDUCING ART COLLECTIVE PAPER RAD  
EXPLORES THE REAL MEANING OF RAVE.

WORDS VIVIAN HOST IMAGES PAPER RAD

Paper Rad is a three-person cyber tribe made up of brother/sister duo Jacob (29) and Jessica Ciocci (30), and Ben Jones (29). Though originating in Boston, they geographically traverse the Bermuda Triangle between Pittsburgh, Providence, and Western Massachusetts; a rare photo of them on their website shows them looking like *Super Mario Brothers* characters who have just liberated a thrift store of all its crazy-patterned and fluorescently colored items.

These are the “facts” about Paper Rad, but more important are the fictions, which are contained in their 2005 artist monograph-ish *Bj and da Dogs* and their new extended comic *Cartoon Workshop/Pig*

*Tales* (both on PictureBox Inc.); and in *TrashTalking* (Load Records), an eyeball-searing DVD of vignettes released in summer 2006. A peep inside the Paper Rad-iverse reveals comics of Garfield in a wheelchair doing graffiti and Howard the Duck visiting a strip club, seizure-inducing Flash videos of Gumby having LSD daydreams (set to mind-fuck cell-phone techno), fonts last seen on Mac SE computers, and jokes about CD-Roms, ancient Egyptians, and nuclear holocaust.

“What is crucial to Paper Rad can never be captured in time or space, nor a big sticky Velcro net,” says the collective, who chose to answer our questions together, like the giant, pulsating brain of postmodern psyche-out that they really are.

For more from this interview, visit [www.xlr8r.com](http://www.xlr8r.com). [www.paperrad.org](http://www.paperrad.org)

**Has anything supernatural ever happened to you in the process of making art?**

I once drew a picture in my sleep. The paper was by my bedside and I picked up the marker and drew a mysterious doodle, a doodle from another world. I think experiencing art and pure creativity can be pretty weird and powerful and supernatural, but it's the most natural force in the world which we must harness for the good of the future.

**How do you work together? It seems you collaborate, but you each have your own characters that you work on, such as Tux Dog...**

It's like the Wu-Tang: Someone might make a beat, then others come in and layer other elements on top, then we all get stoned and shoot a gun on stage.



Each of us is developing characters all the time. Tux Dog [a tuxedo-wearing dog] is nearly 20 years old. He is open-source now and free for anyone to use. In the beginning, each character was more played with by everyone, things were more mangled and confused and fun and fucked with—we were all exploring ourselves and each other. It is still like that but each person’s style or character is more defined. I think that is a natural progression.

**How old were you all when you got your first computer and what programs were you most hyped on?**

Ben was 11 and he had a PC clone running DOS; he was into *King’s Quest*, *Leisure Suit Larry*, Word Perfect, and using BASIC to program text-only adventure games full of invisible amulets, troll encounters, endless ladders into the sky, and always a scary green bag of potion. Jessica and Jacob were 13 and 12 when they got a Mac SE. They were hyped on Hypercard, *Dark Castle*, Super Paint, *Frogger*, and Mac Drums.

**A lot of your work has to do with interacting with stuff from the past: old computer applications, VHS tapes, Gumby. Are there any things from the present that you really identify with?**

We are mainly interested in timeless beings or objects that transcend their earthly form. However, you could say that the way we construct narratives, the tools we use, [and] the language we use to express things is all informed by contemporary culture. The things we choose are very specifically things we *do* personally feel a connection to, generally a positive connection—for instance, Garfield and Gumby. It is important to be yourself in making art; i.e. dig inside to find those things that mean something to you—specifically you—and that is what other people will strangely respond to.

**Is rave culture going to come back?**  
For us, the rave set a new myth-standard in our lives. When we perform live on tour, or create immersive environments, we strive to achieve an experience equal in power to that of a rave.

There have been great warehouse parties all over the United States recently; however, 75% of the people in attendance would hate to think of them as raves, even though they may be illegal, last all night, and for the most part the music is abstract electronic dance music. We like to call these parties “raves” because it is interesting and funny to mix up cultures—people get so caught up with definitions, they lose touch with what is really important: having fun, making jokes, confusing people, transforming nothing into something.

That said, it is Paper Rad’s opinion that raves might be back but that will soon herald the untimely resurgence of swing dancing so that we must order a pre-emptive strike on the Squirrel Nut Zippers.

**What is your connection to raves/rave culture?**  
Our “rave” experiences [include] a winter solstice pagan outdoor thing in New Zealand, Boston jungle parties and Toneburst events, Microrave in Western Mass (two people dancing), a dirty-rap drunk dungeon party last year, a five-minute “rave” portion of Andrew Jeffrey Wright’s set at his weekly dance party Cold Retarded in Philly, and many amazing DIY parties/shows where we have totally lost ourselves all night freaking out to tweaked, scary electronic noises.

I think it has been important to us to be a sort of “outsider” to many cultures and scenarios. Is this what made us able to make our “rave” video in 2002? If we were true ravers, we maybe wouldn’t have thought of making a rave video, because we would have been too deeply imbedded in the memories and maybe embarrassed or something. It wouldn’t have seemed “novel,” to put it plainly, or “magical,” to put it more accurately.

**What effect has your environment had on your art?**  
Our environment’s effect on us has been “art.” *Dungeons and Dragons* made some of us realize as kids that we can make, be, and do anything, and we

can do it as a group, independent of environmental factors like money or resources. All we need is our imaginations. If you see something wrong or messed up or untrue around you, you gotta do something creative about it to change that; that’s how innovation works. What really excites you and is true or meaningful to you? Find that and go to that, and then do what you can to make it bigger and more powerful, so other kids can see it and find it, and the beacon light gets stronger. Find its most powerful, positive essence and contribute to it.

**Are you shocked at how popular your stuff has become?**

If by “popular” you mean “having more pimples” and by “shocked” you mean “gassy,” then yes, it is kind of shocking.

**Do you ever experience seizures or motion sickness while working on your videos?**

Yes, when we are doing them in the car on the way to the show. We also feel sick watching them after the show because we are sick of seeing them.

**What was the last fight you got in?**

Two years ago one of us was the DJ at a friend’s house party. There were some large fellows who requested something by a West Coast gangsta rap artist I had never heard of. They were offended by my lack of knowledge in this area. Things escalated (including me patting the largest man on the cheek) and I ended up on the floor with everyone screaming, and me knocked out, confused, with a black eye. Now I know who the artist was and I would like to say: Sorry to the guy that punched me, and Mac Dre R.I.P.

**What do you like to waste time doing?**  
Voting.

**What do you feel you would like your art to do more of?**

Bring people closer to the healing light of the Universe, or make vegan pizza for us.

**Are you sure the password to the rave is “rave”?**

Yes, but make sure you print this answer in invisible glow-in-the-dark ink. [*We tried but the ravers stole it all. Sorry dudes.* – Ed.]



TRICK DADDY “SHUT UP”  
FREAK NASTY “DA DIP”  
BOW WOW “FRESH AZIMIZ”  
HOT BOY RONALD “WOBBLE FOR ME”  
L.A. STYLE “BALLOONY”  
STARSKI & CLUTCH “LATE NITE FREAKS”  
ROD LEE “PUT YA HANDZ UP”  
LIL’ TROY “WANNA BE A BALLER”

IMAGE AT RIGHT: “We All Live in This House,” collaged stills from R.A.V.E.R. animations by Paper Rad. Paper Rad-related live performances (clockwise from top left): Doo Man Group, Doo Man Group Pt. 2 (photos by David Ball), Fortress of Amplitude (photo by Galen Williams), Dr. Doo, Extreme Animals (photos by Paper Rad), Extreme Animals live at Nightlite, Carrboro, NC (photo by Galen Williams).





# WHITE MAGICK

KLAXONS ARE THE MUSIC MAKERS, AND THE  
DREAMERS OF THE DREAMS.

WORDS VIVIAN HOST PHOTOS JASON FRANK ROTHENBERG

In 1992, Kicks Like a Mule’s “The Bouncer” was released on Tribal Bass Records, a label owned by British ragga techno vocalist Rebel MC. It was made by XL Recordings founders Nick Halkes and Richard Russell, who would make The Prodigy a household name before subsequently signing M.I.A. and Basement Jaxx.

When Klaxons finally catch on in America—if the British hype machine doesn’t kill them first—you’ll be hearing a lot more about “The Bouncer,” and other rave tracks besides. Though Klaxons are an indie band—guitar, bass, drums, keyboard, and no samplers, thank you—they’re being pegged as the harbingers of a “new rave” scene, in large part because one of their first releases was a cover of the ode to club door-men, albeit a version that replaces the original’s signature bleeping melody with droning synth and squealing guitar, and recasts its infamous refrain—“*Your name’s not down/You’re not coming in*”—as an incredulous cry.

## RAISING THE DEAD

You can be pissed at Klaxons for being so canny, for heralding the rave revival rather than just hinting at it. You can marvel at how a band formed in November 2005 has already found itself at the center of a label bidding war *and* a controversy about whether or not “new rave” even exists. But though they were barely in primary school when the Summer of Love started, 26-year-old Jamie Reynolds, 23-year-old James Righton, and 24-year-old Simon Taylor are not trying to take the piss.

“It was annoying, actually, in the early days, people saying we’re some kind of ironic band,” says Reynolds, the most outspoken of the three. “[Our decision to cover certain techno songs] is more about classic songwriting than having a rave sound. And when we met Richard Russell, he understood where we were coming from. If anyone had the right to go, ‘Look, don’t fucking do this. You don’t understand,’

it would have been him.”

“We wanted to make organic dance music,” Reynolds continues. “All the dance bands relied on electronic programming and drum machines. We wanted to take that and give it a human element. The sort of breakbeats that were used in tunes in the early ’90s, we take those beats and recreate them on drums. We use electronics, but it’s all done by hand. It’s about taking an early-’90s approach but making that into apocalyptic pop songs.”

“Rave is only a minor influence,” concurs Taylor. “We’re looking for that sort of early-’90s euphoric feeling, but not necessarily that sound.”

## DARK TIMES

It’s easy to hate on Klaxons, but to boil what they do down to simple revivalism is inaccurate. In actuality, they appear to have reverse-engineered rave. Where ’ardcore played around with a cartoon-ish sonic darkness—juxtaposing screaming sirens, horribly Hoovering basslines, and kooky samples with uplifting pianos and diva vocals—Klaxons’ music is primarily ultra-harmonic experimental pop.

Lyrical is where the band gets *really* dark. The summer camp sing-along “Totem” is about premonitions and mathematics (“*Signs, you know I see them all the time/Signs, just a fraction of a sine*”), while “Gravity’s Rainbow” is peppered liberally with references to the Thomas Pynchon novel of the same name. “Magick” finds the three at their most ominous (and obvious), with Reynolds shrieking Aleister Crowley incantations like “*Magick/Without tears!*” and “*Do*

**“We’re going to look really stupid  
if the world doesn’t end in 2012.  
But it definitely will.”**

**—Simon Taylor**

Klaxons keyboardist and singer James Righton



*what you will/Do what you will,*” as if trying to bring the famed occultist back from the dead. (A video for the song, where Simon shoots fluorescent green slime from his eyes and the band develops K-shaped stigmata, further adds to the effect.)

I ask the trio about their dance-punk mega-jam “Atlantis to Interzone,” which places a cacophony of freaked-out synth shrieks and stutters atop a bassline cheerfully borrowed from Fugazi.

“It’s about two kind[s] of weird non-spaces,” says Taylor, who tends to get a far-off look in his saucer-like eyes when these subjects come up. “There’s Atlantis the lost city, and Interzone, which is like a William Boroughs mind-space. I guess it’s kind of like trekking through your head from place to place. The idea of young kids singing along between these two places that didn’t really exist was kind of funny...”

“We just wanted to make subversive pop,” interjects Reynolds. “Stuff to make kids do things that were slightly bizarre and really fucking dark.”

And their interest in the dark arts isn’t just some side effect of watching all the *Harry Potter* movies—they’ve got a personal connection. “‘Four Horsemen of 2012’ came from my late granddad who was a spiritual healer and obsessed with 2012, which was going to be the apocalypse,” explains Taylor. “He was a massive follower of Edgar Cayce, and that’s where that came from. We’re going to look really stupid if the world doesn’t end in 2012. But it definitely will.”

#### INTELLIBEAMS

Klaxons are, rather unabashedly, cool nerds. They turn up to our interview in band t-shirts and thrifted gear (James sports an ’80s Nike windbreaker; Simon, a pale-yellow grandma cardigan). Jamie (in Halloween “fun” socks and purple suede Adidas low-tops) totes a bag from a used record store, and can talk about obscure Can songs in the same breath as At the Drive-In and Venetian Snares. Their look (British, whole-some but kind of weird) and sound (particularly their vocal melodies) is oddly reminiscent of The Monkees, only fast-forward 40 years, and add some formative Ecstasy experiences and art school-chic.

Righton and Taylor originally met in school in

England’s sleepy Midlands. They were lured to London by Jamie to start a band, and were quickly corrupted by the East London warehouse party scene. At a few key gigs at a few underground parties in Shoreditch, Klaxons went wild and the kids followed suit. “We used to freak out to the point of not being able to play our own instruments,” recalls Righton. “There was a point where I almost lost my breath ‘cause I was freaking out too much,” concurs Reynolds. “It’s just not a good place to be.”

A handful of tracks (check the *Xan Valleys* EP on Modular) and a couple of key remixes (Simian Mobile Disco, Digitalism) later, and the trio was being shipped to Hastings in the middle of the English countryside to work on an entire album under the guidance of Simian Mobile Disco’s James Ford. Ford, a former member of dance-rock band Simian and a facile electro-house producer in his own right, bestowed upon them a knowledge of analog electronics (feeding their guitars through synths and filters), soothed some of their spazzier qualities, and generally gave their ideas and energy a focus.

“We clicked on similar tastes in music,” says Ford of Klaxons. “They name-checked a lot of fun, interesting bands like Silver Apples and The KLF that made me realize they knew what they were on about.”

Ford also says he thinks the public will be surprised if they’re just expecting Klaxons to be some techno rip-off band. “They’ve got a great sense of pop melody and a certain way of tracking their vocals—the falsettos and singing in octaves. And there’s some depth to the songs; it’s not just party music. It’s maybe less throwaway than people would imagine.”

#### MAGICK MEN

Aleister Crowley defined magick as “the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with the will.” While it can hardly be said that Klaxons are the lone engineers of the “new” rave (London’s Hadouken, Glasgow’s Shit Disco, and Toronto’s Crystal Castles are blazing the same trail), their album, *Myths of the Near Future*—and the uproar surrounding it—is definite evidence that the band’s alchemy is helping catalyze a change in the musical landscape, a change that perhaps Klaxons themselves cannot grok.

Or maybe they can. “I think we’ll get more people turning up to our shows than will turn up to other people’s shows,” predicts Taylor. “There’s definitely sort of a collective consciousness going on where people are more willing to let go and enjoy themselves, which is something that hasn’t gone on for a while.”

Klaxons’ *Myths of the Near Future* (Polydor) is out January 29.  
[www.klaxons.net](http://www.klaxons.net), [www.myspace.com/klaxons](http://www.myspace.com/klaxons)

## “CHANG CHOONS” MIXTAPE

### BY KLAXONS

#### JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE “MY LOVE”

Timbaland has completely ripped off Sebastian’s remix of our new single, “Golden Skans,” but we forgive him.

#### BRIAN ENO “BACKWARDS”

Because he uses the words “canoe,” “Peru,” and “gnu” in the same verse.

#### PHIL COLLINS “YOU CAN’T HURRY LOVE”

The best Motown track ever, as recorded by a classic artist. Timeless.

#### SLEEPING STATES “RIVERS/LONDON FIELDS”

Beautiful detuned acoustic tales from London.

#### ARCULARIUS “EDGE OF YOUR MOUTH”

Jonnie Monroe and Christian Carmine (of Portland, OR’s now-defunct Le Push) with some sexy Roxy Music parkside ramblings/witchcraft lovesongs.

#### APACHE BEAT “TROPICS”

Shoegaze noodlings from Brooklyn, double dark and full of light.

#### CAPTAIN “FRONTLINE (DFA REMIX)”

This has got to be the best DFA mix for *ages*.

#### CABIN FEVER “ALINA”

Homemade South Coast UK psychedelic reggae from a paranoid schizophrenic; visit him online at [www.myspace.com/thecabinfeveruk](http://www.myspace.com/thecabinfeveruk).

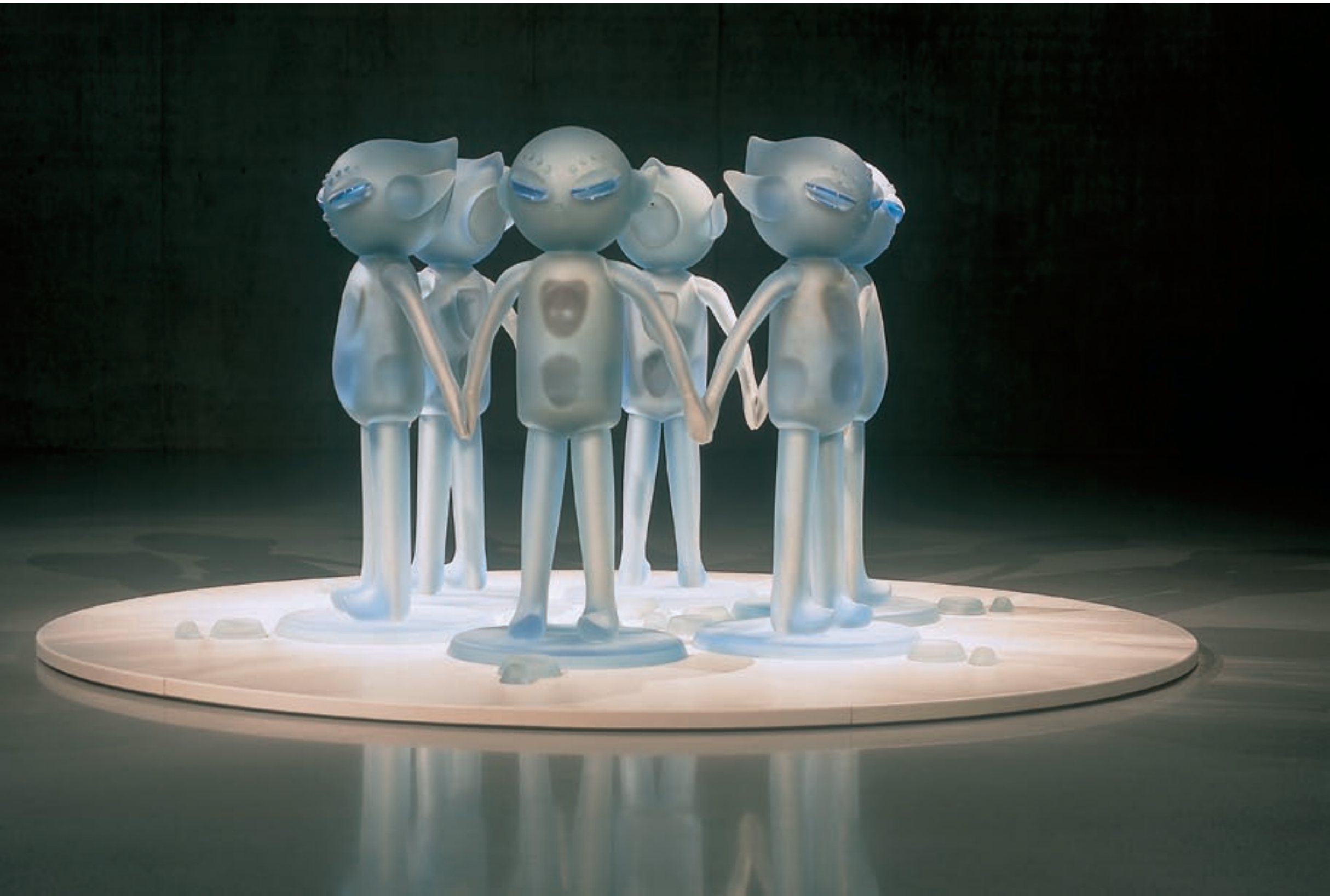
#### CARAVAN “PLACE OF MY OWN”

Check out these Canterbury prog meisters.

#### CHROME HOOF “NORDIC CUR”

Electro doom-space, available at [www.myspace.com/chromehoof](http://www.myspace.com/chromehoof).





Mariko Mori, *Oneness*, 2003, Technogel®, cast aluminum, electric system. Photo courtesy of the artist and Deitch Projects

# HIGHER STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

MODERN PSYCHEDELIC ARTISTS RECONTEXTUALIZE CLUB CULTURE.

WORDS ANDREA CASHMAN & VIVIAN HOST

Strobe lights, fluorescent spandex, and bleepy electronic music. Is this a rave? These days, it's more likely to be a gallery opening. With a growing number of artists using elements indigenous to the club scene, rave is finding new meaning in a "fine art" context, nearly 20 years after its genesis. Pacans to the subculture range from the obvious—Kenny Scharf's blacklit-and-fluorescent "closets" and Frankie Martin's videos and performances—to the merely suggestive, such as Jim Drain and Ara Peterson's hallucination-inspiring installations, but similar themes emerge. Harkening back to the 1960s psychedelic art scene, artists combine sound and visuals to provoke a visceral response from gallery patrons (many of whom probably haven't experienced a 4 a.m. warehouse party for themselves). Rave ideology—using technology to build a better future, drugs as mind-expansion, collective consciousness, and a DIY spirit—reappears in this work; artists expound on foundations laid by Yayoi Kusama, Fred Tomaselli, and Genesis P. Orridge by referencing and employing modern technologies, including motion graphics, digital video, and the internet. Though you might be expecting a satirical spin on the culture, the art within is an intoxicating celebration of the freedom of rave—or at least an attempt to use the past as an antidote to the present.

## MARIKO MORI

Mariko Mori's early work explored Japanese identity in the mid-'90s as it was being shaped by the influence of globalization, technology, and popular culture. Dressing up like manga comic characters and photographing herself in the tech-crazed backdrop of Tokyo's urban hot spots, Mori's anime personas explored the edge of (virtual) reality. Her seductively robotic fashion choices in 1994's *Play With Me* and *Warrior* were nearly identical to cyborg fantasy looks being rocked by '90s techno heads. A year later, Mori personified a Japanese schoolgirl cross-wired with a headphone-wearing candy raver in *Birth of a Star*; photographs of the piece depict her as a cyberpunk pop star wired for sound, amalgamating references from global pop culture in a way only modern technology could have made possible.

Mori's more recent works—including 2003's *Wave UFO* and *Oneness*—speak more directly to the notion of "universal connectivity." *Wave UFO* invites visitors to enter an interactive "outer space" capsule where they are equipped with brainwave monitors. Abstract projections based on the brainwaves appear on the ceiling inside the capsule; each participant sees their own visual representation as well as how it reacts to the other visitors' brainwaves while inside the ship. The entire piece nods to one of Mori's grander themes: technology's ability to unite individuals, and break down national and cultural barriers. Similarly, *Oneness* invites viewers to hug sculptures of six life-sized aliens (a favorite image of the '90s) with their hands interlocked. When squeezed, the aliens emit a soft green glow from their eyes and their hearts start beating. Will peaceful communication with other galaxies soon be possible, or is this just the ultimate chill-out room? You decide.



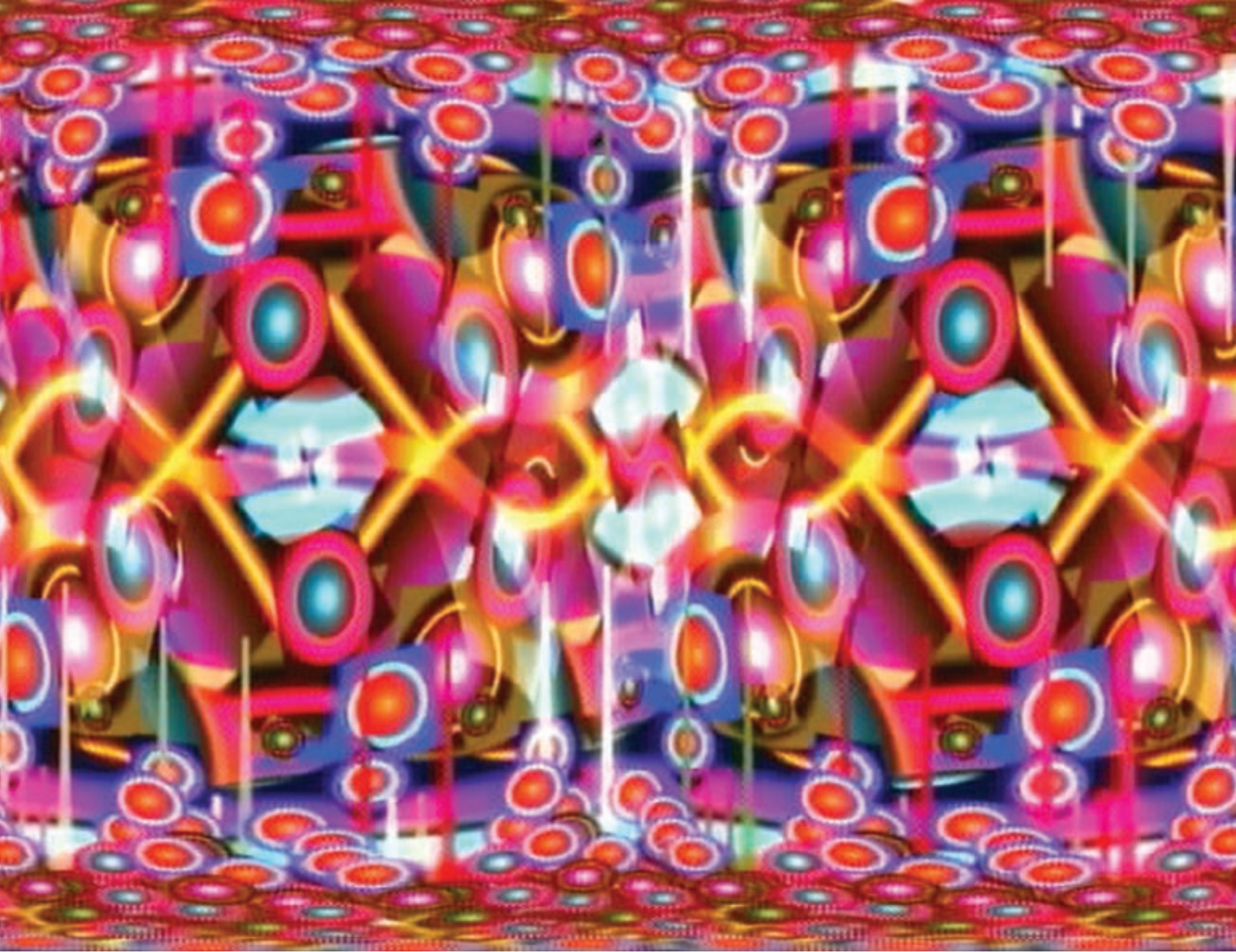


Frankie Martin, *One Minute Rave*, March 2005.  
Photos courtesy of Canada Gallery

## FRANKIE MARTIN

A lot of former candy ravers now sell insurance and have kids and basically deny that they ever wore neon orange UFO pants and 50 million plastic-bead bracelets and see-through purple backpacks with stuffed animals inside. Not Frankie Martin. Despite being possibly too young to have lived the golden years of rave, Martin nonetheless takes the over-the-top utopia suggested by the PLUR (Peace. Love. Unity. Respect.) slogan and applies it to, well, her entire life. Exhibit A is her 2005 installation, *One Minute Rave*, at New York's Canada gallery; in a black-lit room full of re-purposed neon afghans, the installation treated viewers to 60 seconds of flashing strobes, a cardboard cut-out DJ, and pulsating videos and electronic music, all with a distinctly childlike, hand-done aesthetic. Collaborations with pop-culture hacker Cory Arcangel yielded 2004's *Cat Rave* (a video of a cat put into a tiny, rave-like environment) and *414-3-RAVE-95*, a fictitious public-access show where two lanky nerds have a dance party against a background of black-and-white patterns you may remember from the O.G. Apple program MacPaint. Of course, that's not all. Frankie also customizes sneakers, makes stuffed dolls that look like pizza slices (under the name Puffy Smalls), enlists her little sisters to make psychedelic marker drawings with her, and does performances alongside Milwaukee nerdcore heartthrob Juiceboxxxx. You might think to yourself, "I could do this," but, frankly, you don't have the balls. You might also be wondering to yourself, "Is this really art?" Well why don't you ask Space 1026, the agnès b. galerie du jour in Paris, the organizers of the Liverpool Biennial, or the Bergdorf Goodman Men's Store—all of whom have exhibited her work.

[www.frankieforever.com](http://www.frankieforever.com)



Enlightenment, *After Dark*,  
2004, 30 minute video.  
Photo courtesy of Hiromi  
Yoshii Gallery, Tokyo

## ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment had already showcased their work at Paris' Colette store and Tokyo's Parco Gallery by 2000, but it was their inclusion in the Takashi Murakami-curated *Superflat* exhibition (Los Angeles MOCA, 2001) that brought them the glory.

The four-member Japanese collective—led by graphic design powerhouse Hiro Sugiyama—is best known for a cross-media approach that combines computer graphics, digital painting, and video work to address the boundaries between reality and fantasy. As some of the most in-demand graphic designers in Japan, they are just as likely to work on a cell-phone ad campaign as a gallery installation, blurring the line between their commercial work and "fine art." In summer 2006, this manifested itself in a carnival-esque installation (part of Deitch Projects' *After*

*the Reality* show) that combined playful digital prints of mirrors, skeletons, and monkeys (set against a purple vinyl backdrop) with a surreal, looped video piece and a music video of vibrating abstract shapes set to pulsing dance beats.

At an after-party for the gallery show, Enlightenment really loosened up, doing a VJ set with music from erstwhile collaborator Towa Tei, the Japanese DJ/producer best known for his involvement in Deee-Lite. This laid their rave influence bare, making it apparent the impact that modern software and VJ techniques—namely mixing seemingly random visual elements together into something with a whole new meaning—has had on their output.

[www.elm-art.com](http://www.elm-art.com)

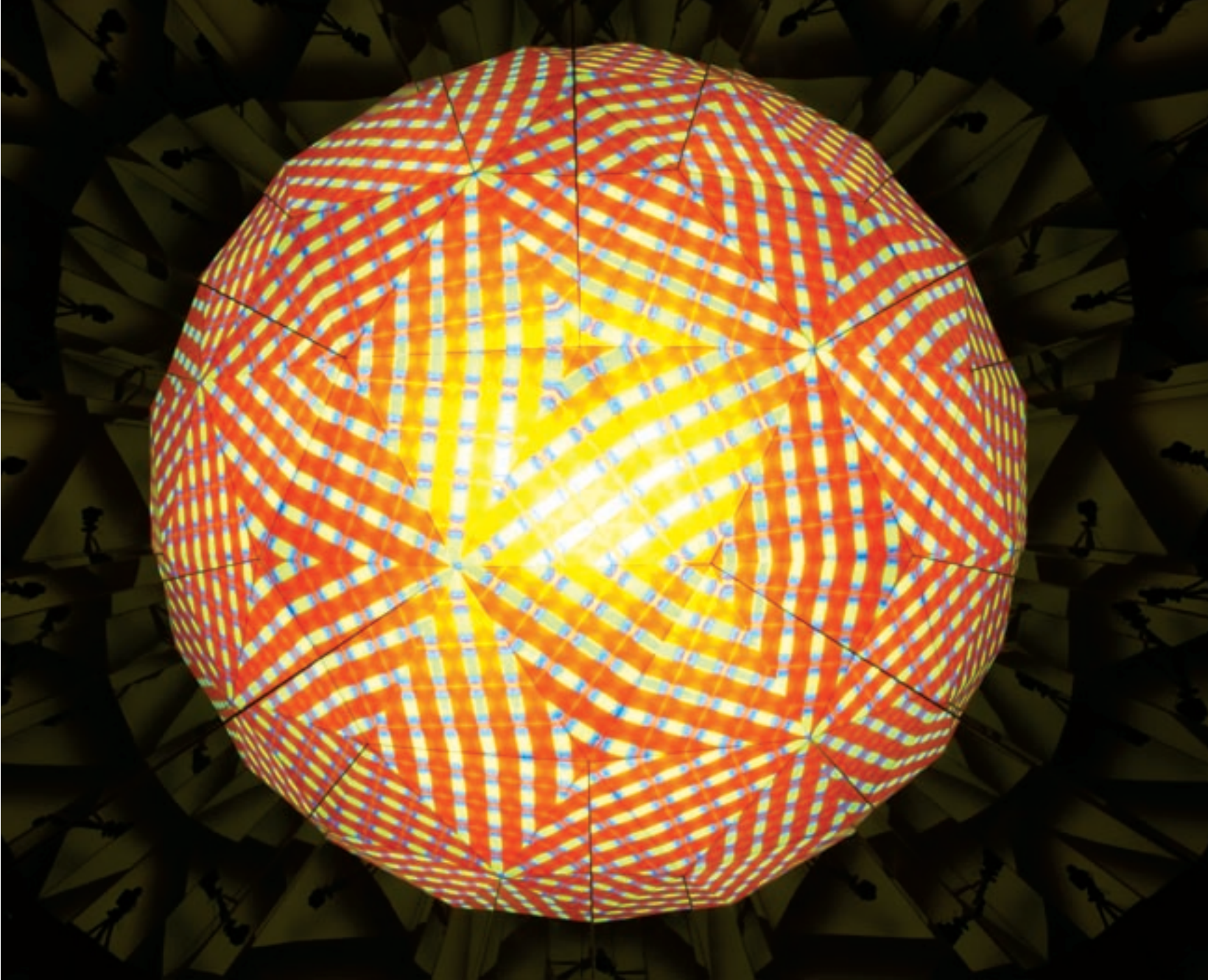


# ASSUME VIVID ASTRO FOCUS

Before superstar DJs were gods and raves were like rock concerts, the rave scene was thought of as a collective effort—the most obvious manifestation of this were party crews, from techno travelers like Spiral Tribe to more market-driven “rave organizations” like Fantazia and Universe. assume vivid astro focus (the name a riff on a Throbbing Gristle’s *Assume Power Focus* album) is Rio de Janeiro-born Eli Sudbrack’s attempt at creating his own post-modern party crew—to the extent that he dislikes claiming leadership of this amorphous collective. Nonetheless, it was his original idea to spread avaf’s cultural virus via large-scale installations that incorporate video art, neon sculptures, porn drawings, and decal stickers. Though copious notes are kept of both the influences and outcomes of his installations, his sensory-overload projects are meant to be ephemeral and ultimately destroyed—a none-too-subtle nod to the idea of the “temporary autonomous zone,” posed in 1991 by anarchist writer Hakim Bey.

avaf’s absorption and digestion of cultural detritus often incorporates elements of dance music and its attendant (often sexually-charged) culture. Sudbrack (who now lives in New York) also frequently collaborates with Honeygun Labs’ Bec Stupak, who began her career in video art by VJing raves at the (Washington) DC Armory. For the 2004 Whitney Biennial, the pair reclaimed public space with a site-specific installation at the rollerskate circle at Central Park (using music from L.A. band Los Super Elegantes); in 2005, the duo tried their hand at pop, making an unofficial music video for Yoko Ono’s *Walking on Thin Ice*. Most recently, avaf collaborated with Brazilian *baile* funk proponents Tetine—themselves no strangers to cultural sampling—during the 2006 *Tropicalia* show at London’s Barbican Centre. And, like the ravers of yore, Sudbrack has left room in this recombinant utopia for mass consumerism—a line of LeSportsac bags printed with avaf designs is out now.

assume vivid astro focus installation view, 2004. Photo courtesy of John Connelly Presents, New York



# JIM DRAIN & ARA PETERSON

A forest of giant pinwheels. A fluorescent kaleidoscope hallway. Rotating geodesic spheres. A soundtrack of buzzing analog electronics and alien disco from Spacemen 3/E.A.R. genius Peter Kember (a.k.a. Sonic Boom). Jim Drain & Ara Peterson’s 2005 show at New York’s Deitch Projects gallery was a hallucinatory scene somewhere at the intersection of Willy Wonka’s factory, the party sequences of the ’60s B-movie *Psych-Out*, and a particularly well-done campsite at Burning Man. Named after a word for “lucid dreaming” (the surreal state between being asleep and awake), *Hypnogoogia* challenged viewers to reach altered mental states via intense optical onslaught (LSD-spiked punch optional).

Drain and Peterson have been practicing this art-punk shamanism for a while, though—notably as part of Forcefield, a Providence, RI collective birthed from the Fort Thunder warehouse (the same “scene” that also brought you Lightning Bolt and Black Dice/Soft Circle’s Hisham Bharoocha). Like the love children of Ken Kesey’s Merry Pranksters and The KLF, Forcefield’s show at the 2002 Whitney Biennial was a techno-hippie fun fest: A throng of humanoid sculptures, clad in fluorescent knitted suits, glowed, pulsed, and emitted synthesizer sounds created by the Forcefield band, which is composed of Peterson (a.k.a. Patootie Lobe) and Drain (known as Gorgon Radio), plus friends Meerk Puffy (Matt Brinkman) and Le Geef (Leif Goldberg). A closer listen to the installation’s soundtrack, released in 2002 as the album *Roggabogga* (Load Records), reveals a sonic overload of broke-down booty anthems and intense, staticky noise made with analog gear, crazy oscillators, and fog horns. Post-modern electronic noise “happenings”? Hippie rave 3000? Sign up here.

Jim Drain & Ara Peterson, *Large Video Kaleidoscope*, 2004, Mirrors, DVD projection, 12’ sphere. Photo courtesy of Deitch Projects





# THE PERCOLATOR

GREEN VELVET MAKES GOSPEL HOUSE THAT’S NEVER SOUNDED SO DIRTY.

WORDS STACEY DUGAN PHOTOS CHRIS EICHENSEER FOR SOMEODDPILOT, CO.

Don’t start Curtis Jones talking about Jesus—you’ll likely never get him to stop. “I have no problem tellin’ it like it is, ’cause I know I’m going to live on forever!” he laughs on the phone, nodding to Christianity’s promise of an eternal life in heaven. Though Jones—the production veteran you know as Cajmere and Green Velvet—is easygoing enough to crack a joke or two about his religion, nothing about his devotion is less than sincere.

Jones came out about his born-again status on MySpace about three years ago. These days, he posts frequent blog entries proclaiming his love for the Lord; he’s listed Cajmere’s band members as “The Holy Ghost and me,” and cross-references Green Velvet’s sound as techno/house/Christian. His 2005 single, “No Sex,” is as overtly in favor of sexual abstinence as pop music—particularly in the dance genre—gets. That same credo gets shouted out on his new mix, a Ministry of Sound double-disc (one part Cajmere, one part Green Velvet) that is heavy on Jones’ original productions (11 tracks) and tempered by a slew of house joints by producers such as Mark Grant and Trouble Men. The Cajmere disc is punctuated by “He Is,” an ecstatic track by Song Williamson with the refrain “*My joy/Yes He is!/My faith/Yes He is!/My strength/Yes He is!/My freedom!*” It isn’t so ballsy a move in a genre known for its spiritual vibes and gospel roots, but nonetheless, the message is a bit heavy-handed.

“People are like, ‘Oh my God, he’s trippin’,” Jones relates. “They always thought I was weird, but for me to be talking about Jesus, they’re like, ‘Oh he done really lost it now.’ But my whole thing is that I’m just here so I might help somebody who might be catch-

ing Hell, being chased here and there by the devil. I’ll be like, ‘You know what? No worries. There’s hope. There’s a way out other than drugs and suicide.’”

## PLEASURE PRINCIPLES

Jones says his spiritual awakening was a long time coming. Though he’s been making music since 1993, his popularity soared during the mid-’90s rave boom—an era in party culture widely associated with unregulated hedonism. He candidly admits that he spent the first decade of his career experimenting sparingly with drugs and researching various sorts of religions—sometimes both in tandem—battling depression and often feeling tremendously alone, despite his rising success.

Not that Jones was ever really so scandalous, at least as far as superstar DJ/producers go. The subject of his first and most enduring hit, “Percolator”—despite its thigh-wrenching beat—is no more titillating than its author’s anticipation for a freshly brewed pot of coffee.

Even so, it would be reductive to take anything Jones releases at face value. He plays with contradictions of tonality and layers of mimicry. He can set his emotive dial at the furthest extremes—from sinister

to celebratory—and make it convincing, packing relatively simple production with subtly powerful sonic nuances and making seemingly straightforward dialogue ooze with subtext. The resulting narratives emerge rife with double-speak, a sort of riddle listeners have to think their way out of. “La La Land,” for example, is a fist-pumping techno track which features Jones grumbling in monotone over a petulant, industrial bassline: “*Something about those little pills/Unreal/The thrills/They yield/Until/They kill/A million brain cells.*”

Peeling away the layers of irony can get exhaustive: What do we make of the gleeful, drugged-out partiers on the dancefloor, proudly singing along? And what of the wizard behind the curtain? Is he actually reveling in such lowbrow sarcasm?

## REALLY REAL

Talking to Jones, the answers come slow and steady—though, like his songs, they need a bit of deciphering. Full of flamboyant energy, he loves to laugh. His jokes assume a level of intimacy with their listener—no matter how offhanded or cynical his remarks, they’re underscored with a great deal of compassion. Part of that understanding stakes some claim in his authenticity as a true rags-to-riches artist: He dropped out of grad school one year shy of attaining his degree in engineering to make music on a \$20 Yamaha keyboard, which is what he used to make classics like “Percolator,” “Flash,” and “La La Land.”

“When I look back on it now I’m like, ‘Oh my God, what was I thinking?’” he says. “I must have been the biggest fool to think I could do it! I’m a little bit wiser now, and I don’t think I would make that same decision—I don’t know. But at that time in my mind, music was what I was meant to do. I had some really, really rough times, but when I was at the lowest of





“My body starts to jack,  
like back in '84.”

my low I prayed and it all turned around. That’s when ‘Percolator’ came out. It was rough. They use the phrase ‘starving artist’ and I’ll tell you, I was living it for real.”

Jones takes a lot of pride in tackling some of the bigger social issues through his music, including racism (“When?”), drug use (“Genedefekt”), and sexual abstinence (“No Sex”). “The young people—who, mind you, are my audience—are always trying to make sense out of it at all,” he says. “Like there’s a lot of young people who are aware of racism and sometimes they don’t understand why the older people in society don’t do anything about it. They’re like, ‘Well, I know that something’s not right here, so how come nobody’s stepping up?’ And I keeps it real. So I’m stepping up. You gotta step up or get stepped on.”

It’s that tension between eccentricity, comedy, and worldly realism—spiced with a bit of fire and brimstone—that typifies Jones, now 39 and a veritable elder of electronic music. Still, like all true house heads, it’s about the music, above all else. The latest Green Velvet single, “Shake and Pop,” embraces that very ethos. “*On the dancefloor/I feel the beats more/My body starts to jack/Like back in '84,*” he sings in this tribute to DJ- and club culture. “It’s just a fun song,” says Jones. “I had been going through so much stuff spiritually, it’s like, well, you know, we still can have fun.”

Ministry of Sound Sessions: Cajmere vs. Green Velvet is out now. For more from Green Velvet, check [www.xlr8r.com](http://www.xlr8r.com). [www.green-velvet.com](http://www.green-velvet.com), [www.ministryofsound.com](http://www.ministryofsound.com)



**CAJMERE “PERCOLATOR” (CAJUAL, 1992)**

The “Percolator” was the first time I had gotten a track to sound the way I wanted, but nobody was loving it as much as I was, so I just kept remixing it. The “Percolator” (that got released under that name) is actually the third version of the track. I liked the original much more, [which is now released as] “Keep Movin’” But it blew up. I was totally surprised.

**CAJMERE “BRIGHTER DAYS” (CAJUAL, 1992)**

I did [this song] with one of my favorite people, Dajaé. She’s from the school

of doing Top 40 songs and she knows how to bring it. “Brighter Days” was one of the first vocal songs I did and I was really happy with how it all came together. I like trying to write positive, uplifting themes, because that helps us get through whatever we’re going through.

**GREEN VELVET “FLASH” (RELIEF, 1995)**

In the '90s, when the raves were happening, I was seeing some stuff that was not right at the parties—bad little kids doing bad little things. I

came from the school of it being all about the music, and then I started seeing the drug element creep into it. Around '97 the media started to sensationalize it and really focus on the drug aspect. From that point forward it’s like the kids thought that once they went to the raves it was all about taking drugs. That’s what “Flash” is about.

**GREEN VELVET, “LA LA LAND” (RELIEF, 2001)**

When I did “La La Land” I was like, ‘Oh, I like this! It’s so hot, I gotta start the show with this one!’ I did a couple shows and started off with “La La Land” and people were not having it.

**GREEN VELVET “SHAKE AND POP” (RELIEF, 2006)**

“Shake and Pop” is just a fun song. In the beginning, a lot of people didn’t get it, but now they’ve warmed up to it. That’s the story of my life. I’m always trying to do things that are a little bit different than what’s going on; it’s understandable if people don’t appreciate them initially.

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# PROSE & CONS

BUSDRIVER FIGHTS GENTRIFICATION,  
ONE LEFTFIELD POP SONG AT A TIME.

WORDS ROB GEARY PHOTOS ZACKARY CANEPARI

If you didn't know that Regan Farquhar is actually Busdriver—second generation Project Blowed rapper, stalwart of the L.A. indie rap scene, architect of a fifth solo album of impassioned and impressionistic raps—you might think he was a grad student in literature. He looks the part, seated outside a café in L.A.'s hipster Silverlake hood, with a copy of Haruki Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* resting atop a composition book.

Neither does he look out of place with his tweedy blazer and black-rimmed glasses; no surprise: he was a Silverlake resident for a spell. "I moved here a couple years ago, and I was living here a minute, but I was kind of forced out," he says. "My rent kept going up. I still love Silverlake, though: it's comfortable, it's very local, record stores, Spaceland—it's cool. Unfortunately, all the kids, they jack up the prices.

"That gelato spot," he says, gesturing to a bustling storefront across the street. "That's like a beacon. In the summer it was hopping at all hours. Over the summer they couldn't keep gelato in stock! I was worried it was gonna close the little pupusa spot, but I think that the pupusa spot's okay, at least for right now. I don't think the clientele overlaps much."

## WORDY RAPPINGHOOD

It's hard to say which joint might hold more fans after a Busdriver show these days; after all, his fifth album, *RoadKillOvercoat*, is dropping on Epitaph (meaning Bus is now labelmates with Bad Religion and Sage Francis) and he's been opening for acts from French rhymers TTC to indie rock darlings Deerhoof. *RKO* begins with the loopy, upbeat "Casting Agents and Cowgirls," where Busdriver spits lines overflowing with witty jabs and absurd asides before dipping into a partly sung chorus. L.A.'s beat mavericks Boom Bip and Nobody aid Busdriver's hyperactive metaphors and stylistic switchbacks, layering techno zip, grunge guitars, and

even fake reggae into a sonic soup that improbably winds up somewhere between Top 40 and classic rock.

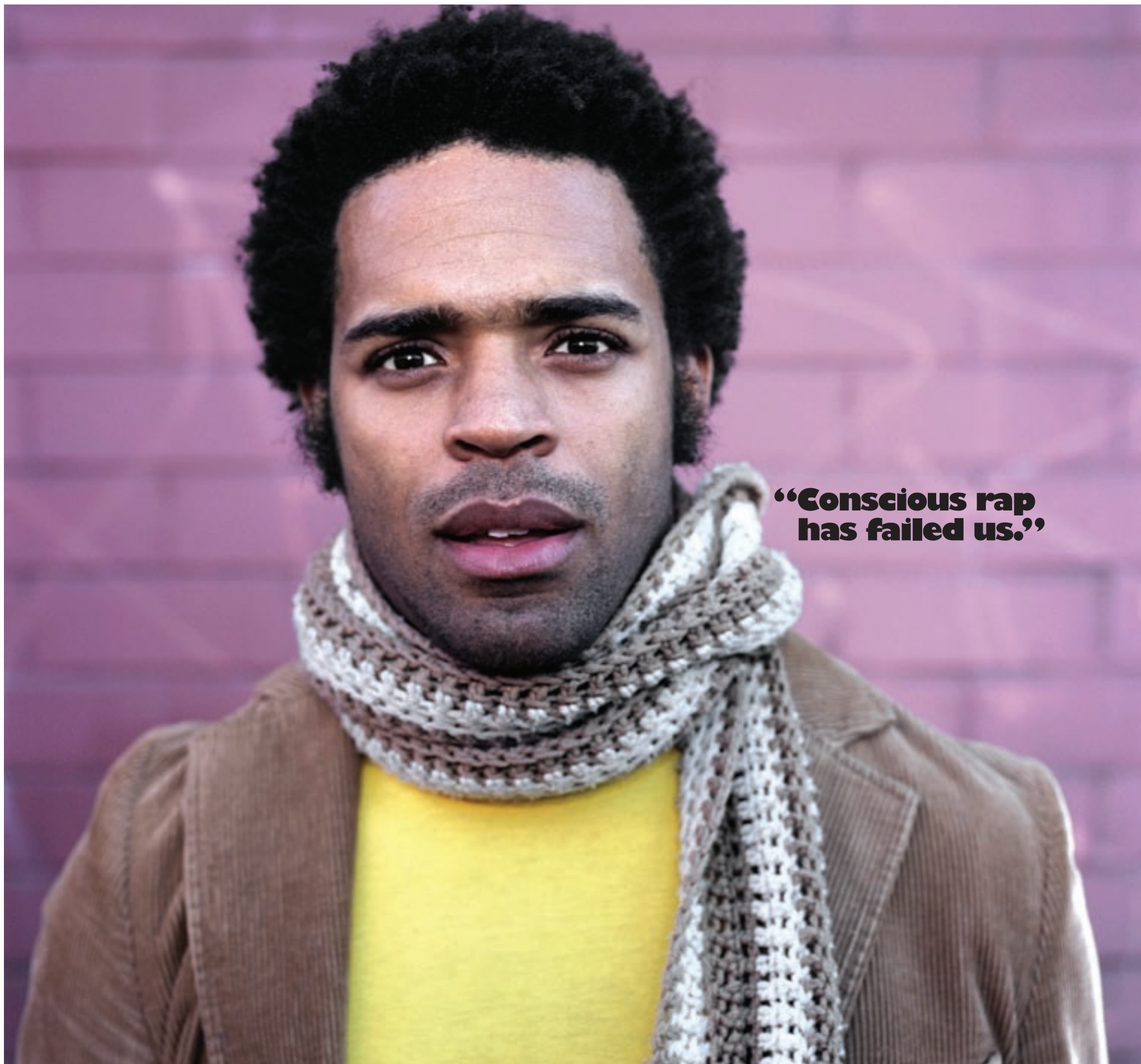
"I was interested in pop formula and form," explains Farquhar. "I say that... but it's not necessarily how [a song] comes out. That's what Boom Bip had in mind, too. The beat [for "Sunshower"] sounded a little Depeche Mode-y to me, but I was all for it. I don't feel [fenced] in by hip-hop or anything like that. I'm not oblivious to whatever else is happening in the music world. I'm not just ciphering at my house with a four-track, watching CNN."

Bus might talk some shit, but he'll be the first to admit that he often *can* be found at home ciphering and watching CNN—at the moment, he's got his eyes on the 2008 election. "I hope Barack Obama will run, but he's almost too nice, he doesn't call anybody out!" Farquhar muses. "He's really a middle guy. I think that's kind of smart. You have to take into account, he *is* young and black—you're already a fuckin' wildcard."

Then, true to fashion, he can't help fucking up the commentary with a little of that patented Busdriver surreality. "So maybe we'll have a black man, a woman, and a leprechaun [running for office]," he speculates. "A leprechaun running for the Green Party."

## FREEING SPEECH

It's these contradictions that drive Busdriver and *RoadKillOvercoat*. He aims for pop and ostensibly misses. He



“Conscious rap  
has failed us.”



analyzes the failures of indie and conscious hip-hop even as he releases a politicized record that will get filed under “indie rap.” He rants about the elections while dissing shut-ins who obsess over the latest headlines.

If anything, it seems like Busdriver is just wary of becoming the posterboy for a genre he’s not even that into. “Conscious rap has failed us,” he says. “I don’t like the real didactic, over-handed political jargon that rappers clutter their songs with—it’s counterproductive sometimes. I think it’s healthy that it’s out there but the context is outmoded. It’s like ’60s Black Panther fist-in-the-air shit still happening... It’s 2006 and that just doesn’t apply anymore. I don’t have an answer for it! I do my social/political jabs mostly at the lefty kids, hippies, [and] people like myself; liberal armchair lefties who just kind of bitch and moan but [offer] no counter-myth to what the right wing has done.”

That’s right, agoraphobic bloggers: Busdriver’s got your number on “Kill Your Employoa (Recreational Paranoia is the Sport of Now),” a thundering condemnation of lazy people, Halliburton, and bad feelings on all sides, where a self-deprecating Busdriver paints himself as “just another rapper know-it-all.”

#### POCKET PROTECTOR?

If there’s one thing Farquhar admits to not knowing, though, it’s how to save indie hip-hop from the nerdy corner it’s painted itself into. “There’s this clique-y-ness that is killing the appeal of the genre,” he says. “No one tours with anyone that’s not on their label or part of their group. People find their comfort zone and stay in it. I’m seeing indie rap careerists kind of doing their thing, but that’s it. There’s kind of no new blood, because there’s no scene to really develop someone new. Everyone came out of the ’90s [but] no one’s coming out of the 2000s, so the whole subgenre’s less interesting... which is unfortunate because I can’t really divorce myself from it!”

Indeed, it would be impossible for this intrepid wordsmith to get away from the style he helped define with his hyper-syllabic, stream-of-consciousness flow. But instead of separating himself from it, he’s using his past to try to stretch the present a little bit further.

“I’m kind of a mishmash of the older Good Life/Project Blowed people,” he explains. “I’m an extension of them. My whole approach to music is based on [their ethos]: to use free association, dabble in other genres, develop different facets of what you do. [I’ll] always be rapping [or] freestyling over different kinds of music, whether it’s jazz, blues, rock... or bluegrass.”

Busdriver’s *RoadKillOvercoat* is out January 26 on Epitaph.

www.busdriversite.com, www.epitaph.com



## “DUMMIES FOR RUMMY” MIXTAPE

BY BUSDRIVER

**DUNGEN “DU E FOR FIN FOR MIG”** Picture sprites floating about your head, peltng you with quarter notes. You’ll be thrilled and scared all at once.

**YES “WE HAVE HEAVEN”** The theme music for charging Pegasus, soaring through rings of fire over seas of outstretched hands.

**DAVID BOWIE “SONS OF THE SILENT AGE”** I imagine Ziggy (in full glam drag) calmly slapping scientists draped in lab coats when this song is played.

**DAFT PUNK “OH YEAH”** #1 ass-shaking theme. No one is immune to its sway over the lower regions.

**LABWASTE “GET THE SIGNAL”** When most people catch wind of this one, they realize it’s the only song they should ever have intercourse to.

**MAX TUNDRA “LIGHTS”** Fewer bands/groups make me happier than this bunch.

**BLONDE REDHEAD “IN PARTICULAR”** This song summons a certain aspect of my personality. Not one that I’m fond of, but nonetheless, it is special and deserves attention.

**ABSTRACT RUDE “COAT OF PAINT”** I have gazed deeply into women’s eyes while this song played. Nothing ever came of it, but the intent was there.

**BARBARA MORGENSTERN “KLEINER AUSSCHNITT”** I miss Amsterdam. I am Black Pieter.

**OF MEXICAN DESCENT “SOMETHING COOL”** Brilliant in its brevity, enthralling in its execution.

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Trainspotting in downtown Manchester with Marcus Intalex

# THIS CHARMING MANC

DRUM & BASS MAGNATE MARCUS INTALEX SPINS CYNICISM AND GLOOM INTO SOMETHING GOOD.

WORDS KYLE PIERSON PHOTOS KEITH YONG

Marcus Intalex is the most lovably grumpy character in drum & bass. It's rare to encounter this Manchester native not engaged in an impassioned rant about something, whether it's recounting the story of his records spilling all over the luggage conveyor belt at London's Stansted Airport or grouching about the high prices of toll roads in the UK. "I hate people who can't drive, people who butt into other people's business, service stations, and airports that charge shitloads," he says when I ask for a short list of his pet peeves. "I hate the way everything is turning into a police state; there's cameras everywhere all the time. I hate the lies that the government and the press tell." But what about small dogs? "Small dogs are okay."

For someone so pessimistic (not to mention a fervent fan of New Order and Joy Division), you'd expect Intalex (born Marcus Kaye) to produce dark, angry bangers—or, at the very least, sad, minor chord-laden jams. No dice. His name is synonymous with uplifting, house-influenced drum & bass that pairs soaring vocals, emotive strings, and positive vibes with a rock-solid foundation of tough breaks and clever bass. This isn't your cocktail-lounge-variety "jazzy" D&B; try out anthems like "Play On Me" and "3AM"—both created with frequent collaborators ST Files and Calibre under the MIST:ical alias—on

a huge stack of speakers and find out. Or pick up a copy of the trio's long-awaited debut, *The Eleventh Hour*, which features vocals from house divas Diane Charlemagne and Robert Owens, as well as a rather scathing critique of the current D&B scene rapped by MC DRS on the title track.

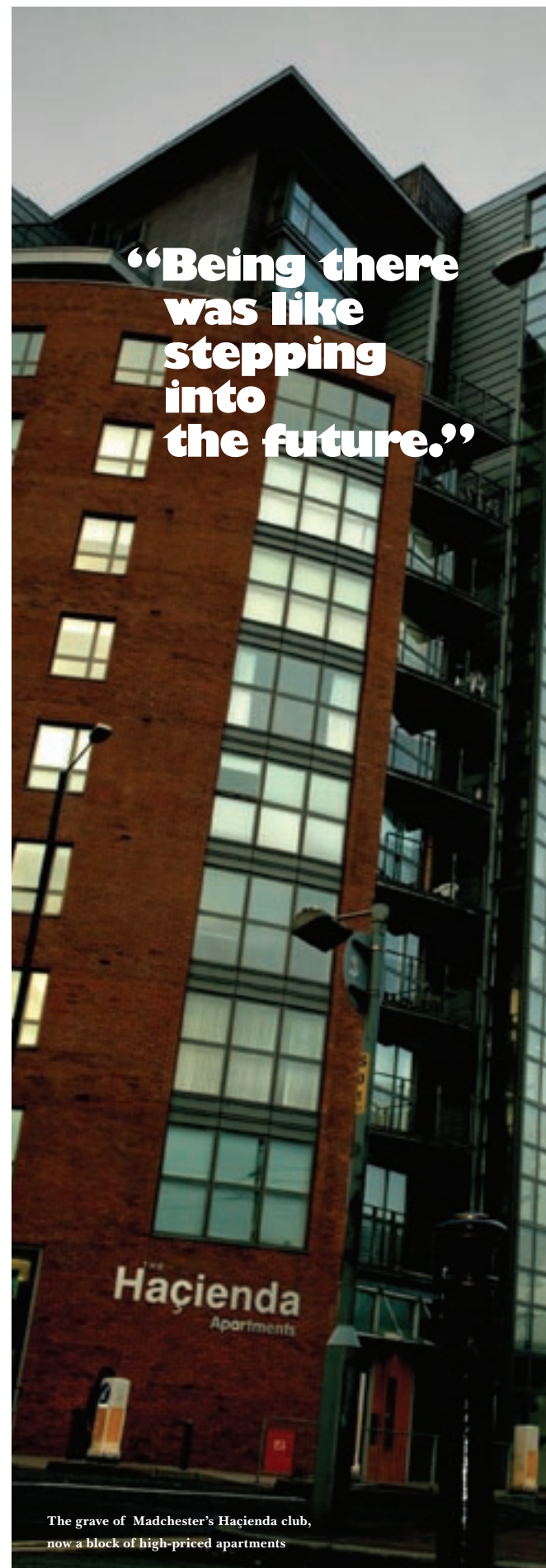
"Take me back 10 years and I looked up to a lot of people in this scene and the music they were making," says 35-year-old Kaye, who started producing jungle with Mark XTC in the mid-'90s under the name Da Intalex. "These days, there is hardly anybody that is still breaking boundaries and twisting my head and getting me excited." A few years back he decided to look outside of drum & bass' endless feed-back loop for inspiration, and cites dub records, Steve Spacek, Carl Craig, and Âme as influences, along with Radiohead. "I admire their ability to be different all the time," he says. "They keep things deep with so much beauty and emotion, and their use of effects to create sonic sculptures, and their drum patterns are amazing—you don't hear the same pattern over two tunes."

Perhaps Kaye's biggest inspiration of all is the city of Manchester, which he calls his "spiri-

tual home." (He grew up 25 miles north, in the small town of Burnley.) "It's a wicked size—big enough to get lost in but small enough to know a lot of people in your industry," he says. "And it's a very cynical place. The Manchester crowd is hard to please, but if you're good you *will* know about it."

Though his romance with the pulsating center of the grim North started at the age of 12, it had crystallized by the age of 15, when attending a New Order gig at the famed Hacienda club changed his life, musically speaking. "Being there was such an awesome buzz; it was like stepping into the future. After the band finished this DJ came on, and started playing Mantronix and odd rap music. I thought all DJs came on the mic, like at discos; here, there wasn't a word all night and you couldn't even see the DJ. Anyone would have been blown away by that, coming from a small town like I did... That turned me into wanting to be a DJ instantly."

Taking the logical next step, Kaye found a job in a record shop, which led to meeting longtime collaborator Lee Davenport (ST Files). "We used to fucking hate each other," recalls Kaye, chuckling. "I was into hard Belgian and



“Being there was like stepping into the future.”

The grave of Madchester's Hacienda club, now a block of high-priced apartments



Detroit techno and the angrier acid house, and he just wanted to buy happy Italian piano-house cheesy bullshit.” Eventually the pair mellowed out and found a middle ground in producing breakbeat hardcore and proto-jungle, an era Kaye remembers fondly. “I was unaware of potentials then,” he says. “I was just a kid who worked in a record shop and loved music. I lived my life for drum & bass and it was all very stress-free and not complicated. When you start to get success it makes you aware of what you can do and what you can’t do.”

Not that Kaye has been limited by what he can’t do—though the musical cohesion of his tracks may suggest otherwise, he’s never had a music lesson in his life. “I don’t know the difference between a major and a minor chord for a fucking start,” he says. “It’s all trial and error. And most of the time it’s fucking error. I don’t know what I’m doing. I’m just trying to excite myself.”

MISTical’s *The Eleventh Hour* will be out January 29 on Soul:R. [www.soulr.com](http://www.soulr.com)

Intalex sets his watch at the town hall clock tower.



“My idea of a perfect gig these days is to go to a pub with a stack of records and sit there,” confides Marcus Intalex despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that he is constantly touring the world DJing his soulful brand of drum & bass. In fact, he’s so into the pub idea that he almost called the MIST:ical debut *Last Orders*. Here are 10 Manchester records you can enjoy with a pint.

**NEW ORDER “TEMPTATION”**

Listening to New Order has the same effect on me today as when I first discovered them. Their music between ’82 and ’85 was particularly outstanding. I always loved “Temptation” for its mix of synths and guitars, and the fact that the 12-inch version was over eight minutes long!

**JOY DIVISION “SHADOW PLAY”**

When I go into Joy Division mode it takes me weeks to come out on the other side. Whenever I see live footage, it always strikes me how disturbing Ian’s dancing becomes on “Shadow Play.” It’s really powerful.

**808 STATE “PACIFIC STATE”**

I remember hearing “Pacific State” for the first time and inexplicably becoming overwhelmed, even shedding tears. It’s more emotional than watching a rerun of *Lassie*. Oh, the ecstasy.

**YARGO “LATELY”**

This bluesy and delightfully catchy tune is my favorite of theirs. I have actually been working with the lead vocalist, who’s got an amazingly individual-sounding voice.

**THE STONE ROSES “I WANNA BE ADORED”**

This is one of the greatest opening tracks to one of the greatest debut albums of all time. The ending ain’t too shabby either. Goddamn, where did I put my flared jeans?

**THE RAILWAY CHILDREN “BRIGHTER”**

The Railway Children had a much more commercial sound than most other Factory bands, mainly because the lead vocalist could actually sing. Super-nice guitar pop.

**HAPPY MONDAYS “HALLELUJAH”**

Not one of their best, but for me this summed up the whole Madchester thing. I remember seeing Bez and Shaun onstage at the Hacienda, way before this single was released, conducting the crowd with their outrageous trance dancing, which soon swept across the dancefloors of the nation.

**A CERTAIN RATIO “DO THE DU”**

This is very New York-style funk with the familiar “I can’t sing too well” Manchester drone—classic. One of the band members was actually a tutor of mine at a music business college a few years back.

**DURUTTI COLUMN “MELLO PART TWO”**

I’m not sure when this was released, as I only picked it up a few months back. Guitar genius Vini Reilly goes all synth on this dreamy piece of ambience.

**THE SMITHS “THE QUEEN IS DEAD”**

My God, what a band! The way Morrissey and Marr made music together was nothing short of genius. The ending was unfortunate, and not too amicable either, but at least there are hours of great footage, which is enough to keep me miserable for the next few years.

# THE THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH! THE WORLD FAMOUS

## POOL

## TRADES SHOW

FEBRUARY 13TH ~ 15TH 2007 LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER GOLD LOT ACROSS FROM NORTH HALL



# RAVE NEW WORLD

**PHOTOGRAPHY** Ben Mayorga

**STYLING** Liz Baca (The Goods!)

**PRODUCTION ASSISTANT** Ryan Javier Rodriguez

**MODELS** Max and Sydney

**MAKE-UP** Awny Rael (Awny Makes You Up)

**HAIR** Erica Green

Special thanks to VerUnica and Harputs in San Francisco, Landokicks.blogspot.com for the Jordan 5s, and to HNTR for making "it" happen.

**Max** wears Alife Bernie t-shirt, Levi's Redwire Jeans, and Alife Wet Pack hi-tops. **Sydney** wears Mama x Bijules V.I.P. earrings, Alife Kurt t-shirt, Hellz Bellz Warriors zip hoodie, Levi's Redwire jeans, and Alife Wet Pack hi-tops.





**Sydney** wears a beanie by Alife, customized One Hit Wonder t-shirt, Extra Sleeves by Bless (at Harputs, SF), Paul Frank watches, Lips Collette jeans, Paul Frank x Lego bag, and JB Classics sneakers. **Max** wears Milkcrate Athletics hat, Official Tourist hood, Upper Playground Jeremy Fish Ninja zip hoodie, vintage Fresh Jive t-shirt by The Goods!/A. Lippman Archive, Nice Collective Destroy pants, and JB Classics sneakers.







**Max** wears Official Tourist hood and t-shirt, Nice Collective Les pants, Puma x Yashuhiro Mihara sneakers, and stylist's own thermal. **Sydney** wears Mama x Bijules V.I.P. earrings, Bless wool necklace (at Harputs, SF), She-Bible Edie jumper, Judi Rosen Elephant bell bottoms (at VerUnica, SF), Nike Retro Jordan 5 sneakers, and stylist's own character hands.





**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*The Bombay Connection: Funk From Bollywood Action Thrillers 1977-1984, Vol. 1 CD*

Totally amazing launch for this new Bollywood music series, curated by collector and connoisseur **Edo Bouman**. Beginning with the action films of the '70s, Bouman will also reach Indian psych and disco before he's through. CDs include full-color insert jammed with amazing pictures, the 2LP is deluxe to say the least. An exquisite product.

BOMBAY-CONNECTION RECORDS



**L. PIERRE**  
*Dip CD*

Recorded before **Arab Strap** dissolved, *Dip* explores a quieter side of **Adian Moffat**'s musical personality — a deliberate blend of electronic programming and a contemplative live sound. The emotional heft of Moffat's previous group still exists, but only as a dreamlike vibe in the natural mystery of nature. Pretty class stuff.

melodic



**MARTINEZ**  
*Restructured Layers CD*

Another enveloping multi-tracked über-mix from one of techno's new elite. **Martinez** is a hotly-tipped producer from Denmark, where he runs his Out Of Orbit label. Here he takes his already stellar catalog and mixes them all up, sometimes 8 or 9 at a time. Featuring **Robert Babicz** and **Trentemøller**.



**NICO MUHLY**  
*Speaks Volumes CD*

Not only the debut of the Bedroom Community label but also of wildly gifted New York composer **Nico Muhly**, who has worked with **Björk**, **Antony and the Johnsons** (who appears here), **Philip Glass** and more. Seven works for small ensembles with electronics. Produced by **Valgeir Sigurðsson** (Björk). Brilliant.



**JESSE ROSE**  
*Body Language Vol. III CD*

Once London DJ/producer **Jesse Rose** moved to Berlin, falling in with the **Get Physical** camp was a matter of time. Now Rose joins in with the third in the *Body Language* series, a mix of acid house, percussive techno and waves of funk. Includes **Chelonis**, **Sinden**, and plenty of Rose's own waist-winding belters.



**MASSONIX**  
*Subtracks CD*

A project from UK producer extraordinaire **Graham Massey**, featuring ten years of deep sonic exploration. From **Factory's Biting Tongues** to **808 State** to production for the UK's biggest acts, Massey has seen it all. This is the debut of his personal project, and a long time in coming. A deliciously delightful listen.



**DAVE CLARKE**  
*Remixes & Rarities 1992-2005 2CD*

If 2007 brings the return of the rave, then **Dave Clarke** better prep for his worldwide tour. No one expresses extreme electro prowess like Mr. Clarke. Here, 30 tracks are jammed into a special package. The giants of techno remixed by a giant of techno: **Leftfield**, **Moby**, **New Order**, **Green Velvet**, **Laurent Garnier** and so on and so forth.



**FENNEZS**  
*Endless Summer CD*

The definitive laptop album gets a definitive reissue, featuring new artwork from **Jon Wozencroft**, two newly added tracks and a completely new remix and master by the man himself: **Christian Fennesz**. Unavailable for a few years now, *Endless Summer* will make you believe again.



**XELA**  
*For Frosty Mornings and Summer Nights CD*

Due to popular demand, Type Records reissued co-founder **John Twells**' debut release from Neo Ouija in 2003. *For Frosty Mornings...* is a considerably more chill and light affair than the dark nightmare of last year's *The Dead Sea*, but it is just as dense and as carefully manipulated. "Gorgeous, understated brilliance."

—BBC Collective



**JOHN DAHLBÄCK**  
*At The Gun Show CD*

Another producer from the roaringly-hip land of Sweden, **Dahlbäck** is also one of the most prolific producers ever, with a third full-length coming soon on **Kompakt**. 14 club monsters, all previously released as singles on his own **Pickadoll** label. With such a sense of melody and beat programming, success was inevitable.



**RADIO ZUMBIDO**  
*Pequeño Transistor de Feria CD*

With his first release on **Palm Pictures**, **Carlos Barrios** introduced Latin rhythms to an experimental one-man band. *Pequeño Transistor de Feria* (or *Little Fair Transistor*) continues the Guatemalan's journey, recorded in Los Angeles and Barcelona while he was recording film soundtracks. A rewardingly dense album.



**BIOSPERE**  
*Cirque CD*

The revered Touch imprint is bringing this classic back to the marketplace. A landmark of glacial ambience and deep rhythm, *Cirque* shows the retreat of a techno master (**Geir Jenssen**) into the splendor of a new artform, the transmission of emotion through pure sound. *Cirque* is future music. Cinema for the spirit.

TOUCH



**Gang Starr**

**Album Reviews 1.07**



**THREE ALBUMS KICK OFF A PROMISING YEAR FOR HIP-HOP**

**CLIPSE**  
*HELL HATH NO FURY*  
Jive-Re-Up/US/CD

**GANG STARR**  
*MASS APPEAL: THE BEST OF GANG STARR*  
Virgin/US/CD

**CEE-LO GREEN**  
*CLOSET FREAK: THE BEST OF CEE-LO GREEN THE SOUL MACHINE*  
Arista-Legacy Recordings/US/CD



Labels: Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em. This sentiment holds particularly true in hip-hop, where major-label contracts are necessary to maintain a commercial presence but where differences between artists and record companies have become public spectacles, playing out in near-daily updates on music websites. In the most extreme example, the fraternal Virginia duo Clipse's sparring match with Jive/Zomba ended only after group member Pusha T announced his intention to lynch the entire Jive staff in an interview, then apologized. The bizarre scenario induced Jive, which inherited Clipse's contract after Arista Records folded in 2004, to finally issue *Hell Hath No Fury* after over two years of waffling.

The wait proved to be worthwhile. Not only did the hiatus generate enough internet talk to sustain interest in a group fickle rap audiences might have otherwise forgotten about, but it instilled in Clipse a hunger and drive rarely exhibited by rappers whose previous release (2002's *Lord Willin'*) was a commercial success. Whatever your opinion of Pusha and older brother Malice's obsession with the coke deal, the consummately lyrical *Hell Hath No Fury* ups the bar in a season with the highest profile cluster of rap albums (Jay-Z, Nas, *The Game*) in recent memory. Just as impressive as Pusha's and Malice's unrelenting flows and stinging punchlines is a career-best performance by the Neptunes, who produced all 12 tracks. Despite their inordinate riches and perpetual collaboration with insipid popsters, Chad Hugo and Pharrell Williams deliver some of their most experimental (yet still accessible) productions to date in the accordion-flavored "Mamma I'm So Sorry" and the Mantronix-influenced "Ride Around Shinin'."

Things didn't turn out quite so nicely for Gang Starr. In fact, Virgin's mishandling of the 2003 album *The Ownerz* contributed to a growing tension that, for now, has put an end to Premier's and Guru's seemingly unbreakable partnership. In an effort to recoup their losses, Virgin has thrown together *Mass Appeal*:

*The Best of Gang Starr*, a single-disc hits collection that seems pointless considering that *Full Clip*, the double-disc greatest-hits package released in 1999, was Gang Starr's best-selling release. While *Full Clip* wooed Gang Starr's core listeners by including as many unreleased and rare tracks as it did hits, *Mass Appeal* has only two such tracks to speak of ("Natural" and "The Sequence"). Though Gang Starr's legacy as the benchmark for hip-hop purity remains untarnished, *Mass Appeal* doesn't do anything to enhance it.

It's quite apparent whom Sony/BMG archival label Legacy Records has in mind with *Closet Freak: The Best of Cee-Lo Green*. Gnarls Barkley fans. Best known in his pre-Gnarls days as part of Atlanta's Goodie Mob, Cee-Lo released only two solo LPs, making him an otherwise unlikely candidate for the greatest hits treatment. And, while Goodie Mob released three albums on Arista, only three Goodie songs are included here (their most recognizable hit, "Dirty South," is inexplicably left off). Instead, *Closet* serves primarily as a sampler for the bald man's somewhat overlooked solo efforts, *Cee-Lo Green and His Perfect Imperfections* and *Cee-Lo Green Is the Soul Machine*. Despite the fact that it's a somewhat lazy scheme to make a quick buck, it's a pretty good idea. While Cee-Lo's primarily self-produced trips into cosmic funk received an *Idlwwild*-like response from rap fans, Gnarls acolytes are more likely to enjoy the soul-searching "Under the Influence," and may even note that "One for the Road" and the Timbaland-produced "I'll Be Around" are catchier than any Gnarls tune, other than "Crazy." With their fat excised and taken as a single release, the two albums manage to resemble the great record Cee-Lo has yet to create. *Jesse Serwer*





Photo by Derrick Smith

**LILY ALLEN**  
**ALRIGHT, STILL**  
Capitol/US/CD  
With her show-biz pedigree (she's the daughter of the British actor/musician Keith Allen) and a whole lotta MySpace love, Lily Allen quickly became the bloggers' darling long before any of her tracks were domestically released. Fortunately, she's delivered nicely on the virtual promise. Packed with addictive pop hooks and influences from all across the board (hip-hop, ska, lounge, club), *Alright, Still* has everything that it takes to succeed in iPodland. But Allen's lyrics can tend to seem shoehorned (using "*People in the city having lunch in the park/I believe that is called al fresco*" to rhyme Tesco), the production a bit disposable, and the genre-chasing tiresome. That said, she still croons like a Mockney bird ("Everything's Wonderful"), throws down the gauntlet (the ex-hatin'), ska-inflected "Smile"), and does the dance-diva thing ("Friday Night") like no one's business. At only 21 years old, that's saying something. *Aaron Ashley*



**ARBOURETUM**  
**rites of uncovering**  
Thrill Jockey/US/CD  
"Signposts and Instruments" opens Arbouretum's *Rites of Uncovering* with a low rumble—the smooth, deep growl of a bass and fingers gently fretting a guitar. It's a subtle start, but the song's lurch comes off decidedly physical. Immediately, we realize that Baltimore's Arbouretum creates songs to be felt. Then singer Dave Heumann's round, whole-milk voice cuts through the weighty semi-silence, doing a perfect backstroke through the song's guts. Borrowing from Will Oldham, Codeine, and Black Sabbath along the way, Heumann and his bandmates have created what can only be called the best doom-folk record of all time. *Robbie Mackey*



**BENNI HEMM HEMM**  
**KAJAK**  
Morr/GER/CD  
What kind of music comes out of Iceland besides that of Björk and Sigur Rós? Benedikt H. Hermannsson offers a new answer: quiet, upbeat folk tunes, shaped from things like kettledrums and guitars. *Kajak* is Benni's second full-length, and if foreign vocal folk is your thang, it works nicely as a whole: These 13 tracks move easily from one to the next (even if you don't speak Icelandic)—all pleasant stuff. But Morr fans seeking electronics with their acoustic

melodies may be disappointed, as Benni only has room for acoustic sounds this time around. *Janet Tzou*

**BIG BANG**  
**WAY IN JAZZ**  
Arision/UK/CD  
With more grey days than blue ones in England, it makes sense that Londoner Simone Serritella (of production duo Cuica) embraces musical sunshine. Serritella's second Big Bang album delivers a heat wave of near-perfect Afro-Latin and Brazilian-tinged tunes. The Arision boss recruits instrumentalists Jessica Lauren and Nathan Haines, plus vocalists Rasiyah and Xan Blaque, to enliven the samba rhythms of "Dancing Nights" and waltzing triplets on "Summer Fields." Opening with "My Favorite Things" and swinging straight through "Batucada Mondiale," with plenty of blazing Seiji-style side-stepping beats in between, it's clear that Serritella's found his way. *Tomas Palermo*

**BIZZART**  
**BLOODSHOT MAMA**  
Sounds Are Active/US/CD  
In the three-year break since *Ear Drung*, L.A.'s Bizzart has stepped up his game considerably. Still fighting the demons of his abusive upbringing and his father's murder, Bizzart's hybrid of spoken word and rap is complimented by impressive guest spots from Awol One, Yarah Bravo, and Dulak Shaman. On *Bloodshot Mama*, Bizzart expands his sonic spectrum greatly, seating melodic passages next to classic-sounding boom-bap courtesy of Alkalyne and Accident. From the circuit-bent "Stumbling Blocks" to the epically unfolding "Dreams of Sparrows," Bizzart has unleashed an artful hip-hop record that comes off as totally sincere. *Josiah Hughes*

**BONOBO**  
**DAYS TO COME**  
Ninja Tune/UK/CD  
Simon Green's musical palette of organic sounds and silicon beats takes shape on his second proper outing for Ninja Tune. *Days To Come* veers down the melancholic path that's characteristic of Bonobo's previous efforts with a maturity that comes from repeatedly venturing between the studio and the decks. "Walk in the Sky" is an exotic affair with songstress Bajka's classy vocals complimenting some smoldering bass. "Ketto," one of several instrumentals, possesses melodic beauty, warm strings, and a daydream vibe embedded within its moodiness. Perhaps the years have gone by, but Bonobo is no less compelling. *Velanche*

**BOUNTY KILLER**  
**NAH NO MERCY: THE WARLORD SCROLLS**  
VP/US/CD  
After changing his name from Bounty Hunter to the more menacing Bounty Killer, Rodney Pryce proceeded to change the direction of Jamaican music, voicing merciless dubplates in his unrelenting baritone. Despite the hardcore subject matter, Bounty was embraced by dancehall audiences in both NY and JA, and this essential 41-track retrospective (featuring classic riddims) shows why. 'Nuff gun tunes are present—from "Gun Thirsty" to "New Gun"—but there's also a surprising amount of cultural material ("Down in the Ghetto," "Smoke the Herb," "Look," "Fed Up," and "Sufferah") from the poor people's gun' nah. *Eric K. Arnold*

**CANDIE HANK**  
**GROUCHO RUNNING**  
Sonig/GER/CD  
Candie Hank is fucking crazy. From the frantic antics of album-opener "Invitation to Dance" to the elephant-on-a-tight rope sonic comedy of almost-closer "Contortion Two," the latest from Patric Catani is a schizophrenic, wonderfully disheveled mess. Filled with plinky-plonk synth runs, outer-space circus themes, and flaming cartoon chases, Catani opts for a more slapstick approach to the techno-punk of his other gig, EC8OR. But this fun is just as smart as it is silly. *Robbie Mackey*

**CHIMP BEAMS**  
**MENINA**  
Concent Productions/US/CD  
Critics typically classify Chimp Beams as three Japanese electronic-dub dudes, but Mari, K-Go, and U-Ske are more accurately Brooklynites who filter their smooth downtempo sounds through the ragged textures of urban living. *Menina* is a vibrant collection of moods, conjuring visions of lonely cityscapes ("11217") and calm, crisp, melodic moments ("Menina"). Check MC Roger Kahlon's mesmerizing flow on one of the Chimps' most compelling tracks, the dub-centric, jazz-inflected hip-hop cut "Synthesized"—it'll make you yearn for more. *Janet Tzou*

**CHRIST.**  
**BLUE SHIFT EMISSIONS**  
Benbecula/UK/CD  
Scottish electronic composer Christ. (pronounced "Krisst"; short for Christopher) experiences a resurrection, releasing a second proper Benbecula full-length four years after 2003's *Metamorphic Reproduction Miracle*. Christ. was one of the early members of Boards of Canada, so the pastoral, sepia-toned synths and woozy melancholic melodies waft as expected; additionally, there is an anchoring flicker of oxidized, fireside beats. He manifests a bucolic whorl with the best of them, referencing the immersive and animatronic sensibilities of both the Warp and Morr catalogs with an insistent sawtooth undercurrent. *Tony Ware*

**CLINIC**  
**VISITATIONS**  
Domino/US/CD  
Liverpool four-piece Clinic is a one-trick pony. But just because a decorated racehorse only goes fast and turns left doesn't make him less of a champion. Like The Jesus and Mary Chain, Clinic stamps out roughly hewn, frothing pagan surf that's part cryptic disassociation, part manic confrontation. Following 2004's more glazed *Winchester Cathedral*, the ritualistic slur of Clinic's fourth full-length harkens back to the band's craggier, colt-ish daze. Strident urgency imbues the slide-streaked "Family," the melodica-peppered "Children of Kellogg," and the stroboscopic "If I Could Read Your Mind," while "Animal/Harvest" and "Harvest (Within You)" provide haunted counterpoints. *Tony Ware*

**CONJOINT**  
**A FEW EMPTY CHAIRS**  
Büro/GER/CD  
Can jazz become *too* cool? Conjoint flirts with pussyfooting innocuousness, but ultimately stays on the right side of understatedly chill. On 2000's *Earprints*, Conjoint dropped muted, electro-organic jazz that smudged noir soundtrack tropes into a vibrantly somber tone splash. *A Few Empty Chairs*—featuring Karl Berger, Jamie Hodge, David Moufang, and Gunther Ruit Kraus—doesn't deviate much from that template. Berger's vertebrae-tingling vibes and Kraus' crystalline, pointillist guitar daub the foreground with gorgeous turquoise and magenta tones while Hodge and Moufang provide a foundation of subliminal funk. Imagine *In A Silent Way* performed by Nordic introverts. Cool, indeed. *Dave Segal*

**GARY DAVIS**  
**CHOCOLATE STAR: THE VERY BEST OF GARY DAVIS**  
Traffic Entertainment/US/CD  
Eccentric producer Gary Davis' Chocolate Star Records would later issue bass records out of West Palm Beach but, in its early-'80s New Jersey days, the label was primarily an outlet for Davis' own P&P Records-style funkiness. A re-lick of "Gotta Get Your Love," which Davis originally wrote and produced for Clyde Alexander and Sanction, is among several songs derived from Davis' days with Peter Brown, but it's the Funkadelic-style freakout "The Professor's Here" and Chocolate Star cohort Dennis "DJ" Jones' early LinnDrum hip-hop jam "The Pop" that are the true gems of this archaeological dig. *Jesse Server*

**DJOSOS KROST**  
**NO SIGN OF BAD**  
Quango/US/CD  
Already proving their worth on dubby 12-inches, Copenhagen natives Pharfar and Filip compile their efforts into a dozen hypnotic tracks. A seeming nod to Thievery Corporation's bass-heady productions, the resonance of Djosos' handiwork echoes long in speakers and headphones. Of equal merit are their guest vocalists, especially Tuco on the deep "Straight Upfront" and Little Tasha with the most upbeat number, "Cover Me." We can envision U-Roy when listening to toaster Jah Bobby's laidback poetry (though the ragga star's recent work with Nublu is slightly more interesting). Jah has arrived in Denmark and seems perfectly at home. *Derek Beres*

**ALTON ELLIS (FEATURING HORTENSE ELLIS)**  
**I'M STILL IN LOVE**  
Heartbeat/US/CD  
Alton Ellis' entire Studio One catalog of reggae classics is compellingly beautiful, so you know you're onto a winner here: Emotive tracks like "The Picture Was You," "Wide World," and "You Said It Again" are exceptionally rendered, and original first cuts of treasures such as "I'll Be Waiting" and "Deliver Us" are equally superb. While sister Hortense's contribution is less crucial, she's at her best on takes of "Willow Tree," "People Make the World Go Round," and "Why Birds Fly," though a desultory "Breakfast In Bed" spoils an otherwise unblemished collection. *David Katz*

**EXILE**  
**DIRTY SCIENCE**  
Sound In Color/US/CD  
After a few power moves (like Mobb Deep's "Pearly Gates"), Emanon producer Exile breaks out with a dozen-plus guests by his side. While he doesn't showcase a huge stylistic range, his chopped-up, bottom-heavy beats work well with MED's hard-edged rhymes and even with the doo-wop vocal styling of Miguel Jontel; Slum Village gets the best offering with the megaton Detroit anthem "Time Has Come," featuring a booming bassline and gleaming keys. But look past the couple of under-cooked tracks (i.e. "Pay the Co\$\$") and *Dirty Science* shows a great producer in the making. *Max Herman*

**EXPLODING STAR ORCHESTRA**  
**WE ARE ALL FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE**  
Thrill Jockey/US/CD  
*We Are All From Somewhere Else*, by Chicago cometist/composer Rob Mazurek and avant-garde friends, is out-there—a suite of sonic poetry that Mazurek calls an "animated adult/children's story." Concepts include an exploding star, a stingray's journeys, electric eels chatting, destructive humans, and the sound of a star being born, literally. Instruments are juxtaposed throughout: cornets, drums, bass, flutes, synth, guitar, more brass, spoken word, and, yes, eels all factor in. The potential audio gridlock moves fluidly—even if experimental jazz isn't your thing, you can't help being pulled in by what Mazurek pulls off. *Stacy Meyn*

**FAD GADGET/FRANK TOVEY**  
**FAD GADGET BY FRANK TOVEY**  
Mute/UK/2CD-2DVD  
As the first signing to Mute Records, Frank Tovey (a.k.a. Fad Gadget) brought an incredibly theatrical element to the burgeoning industrial scene. Other compilations have summed



**PLUS DEVICE**  
**PUNCTURE**  
Hefty/US/CD  
While some of our obsessive colleagues continue to consume themselves with uncovering the secret identity of Plus Device, the rest of us are just too busy high-fiving each other over *Puncture* to care. Following their debut *Body Heat* EP from early 2006, *Puncture* gives the mystery duo ample space to really fuck shit up. "Pupil Measurement" and the original cut of "Body Heat" open the album up with a solid nod to the Bambaata-fied electro-funk styles of the mid-'80s Bronx before sliding into 808-riddled Detroit ghetto-tech bounce ("Sexual Harassment") and classic Chi-town acid house grit ("Our Pleasure (Realization)"). And thus this lusty, three-city jet set continues, with echoes of Mantronix, Phuture, and Juan Atkins serving as the stimulant behind a phalanx of analog neck-poppers born out of a love for the music rather than some semi-informed fashion statement. *Doug Morton*







up his electronic repertoire, but this is the first to really go beyond his major albums to examine his career as a singer-songwriter. However, it's the two DVDs that really round out the package: A live Mudd Club show, spots on German TV, and an opening slot on Depeche Mode's Exciter tour showcase Tovey at his most daring, while a short documentary explores the gentler period before his death in 2002. Essential. *Ken Taylor*

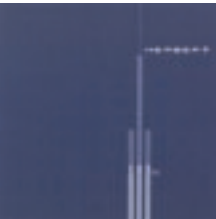
**FAT FREDDY'S DROP  
BASED ON A TRUE STORY**

Quango/US/CD  
Having broken New Zealand's record for most weeks atop the sales chart, *Based on a True Story* finally reaches US shores. FFD, led by the soulful Joe Dukie, taps into an appealing form of bluesy, reggae-inspired, lengthy songwriting: rare considering what constitutes popular music. The hypnotic swing of basslines and keyboard stabs immediately draws the ear in. The further combination of live horns, a remarkable drummer, and a DJ round out a sound somewhere between Motown-era funk and modern soul. When Dukie poetically declares "We do it for the love of music," there's no fiction in sight. *Derek Beres*



**FRANK N DANK  
XTENDED PLAY VERSION 3.13**

Needill Works-Chisel Sound/US/CD  
J Dilla fans already know what the deal is with Frank N Dank, the blunted Detroit duo who honed their flows on classic releases like *Welcome 2 Detroit* and Jaylib's *Champion Sound*. While Dilla produced only three tracks on their long-awaited proper debut, it's the beats—from a committee that includes Oh No and Toronto rhyme vets-turned-beatmakers Saukrates and Kardinal Offishall—that steal the show. Not to be outshined entirely, FND's endearingly lazy rhyme style works well on tracks like "What Up," a Ludacris-esque club banger. At 17 tracks and 55 minutes, however, *XtenDED Play* feels a bit too long. *Jesse Serwer*



**MY MY  
SONGS FOR THE GENTLE**

Playhouse/GER/CD  
*Songs for the Gentle* is really, really nice but not in quite the way the prescriptive title and willfully bucolic sleeve (with its fields, trees, and grazing horses) might imply. A collaboration between a member of Hefner (Lee Jones), a DJ (Carsten Klemann), and a former editor at *Groove* magazine (Nick Hoppner), the Anglo-Germanic, Berlin-based collective creates music somewhere between the arid atmospherica of Lawrence and the twitchy 'n' bouncy playfulness of Pantytec. It's the trio's skills in juxtaposing such contradictory poles so effectively (less finding a middle ground than giving the former a club-friendly booster shot) that makes their debut long-player—like the "Klatta," "Serpentine," and "Swiss on Rye" singles that preceded it—so utterly lovable. *Ausgezeichnet!* *David Hemingway*

**GESCOM  
MINIDISC**

Or/UK/CD  
*Minidisc* is either a quiet milestone or a complete prank. Autechre and sound artist Russell Haswell released the world's first MiniDisc-only album in '98. They splintered 45 tracks into 88 fragments, and instructed listeners to play the damn thing on "shuffle" to keep it interesting. The reissued *Minidisc* is a chicken-scratched mess of ideas choking a hard drive: nasally congested distortion, hip-hop beats that track mud through the house, *LP5*-era laser funk, and the sounds of musicians banging their heads on synthesizers, unable to play anything right. It's a horror-show novelty better suited to gallery installations than the stereo. *Cameron Macdonald*

**HERBERT  
100 LBS**

IK7/GER/CD  
Matthew Herbert can get away with producing silk-pajama'd house for any Macy's dressing room and critiquing capitalism by crushing Coke cans and Big Mac wrappers. A decade ago, he began shaving away the fat from house while keeping its groove essentials intact—making music that lazy critics like me call "microhouse." *100 lbs* collects his three EPs of such sounds. "I'll Do It" drops vocal fragments like specks of rain hitting a windshield, and "Pen" brilliantly struts to a bulbous cadence. This album is more pleasurable than hearing Herbert drive a tank over a dinner plate to protest Bush and Blair. *Cameron Macdonald*

**HI-TEK  
HI-TEKNOLOGY<sup>2</sup>: THE CHIP**

Babygrande/US/CD  
Hi-Tek has expanded his portfolio since creating classics with Talib Kweli and Mos Def. On this sophomore release, he demonstrates why artists as diverse as 50 Cent and Common have enlisted his production skills. Hi-Tek's beats sound as soulful behind Bun B and Devin the Dude as they do backing Nas and Common. On "Josephine," Tek gets eclectic, with Ghostface dropping the similes, while his father, mother, and uncle—as the Willie Cottrell Band—play the blues. But it's when he's reunited with Kweli, on "Can We Go Back," that Tek shines by showing listeners he hasn't forsaken his roots. *James Mayo*

**ANDERS ILAR  
NIGHTWIDTH**

Narita/US/CD  
Fascinated by music and technology from an early age, this affiliate of the ambient techno movement releases his first full-length, featuring his previous EPs on Narita as well as a few exclusive tracks. The overall mood here is that of hypnotic relaxation, a movement towards cool synth breezes, delicate percussive workouts, and serene melodies. Using an arsenal of modulated effects, there is a sense of motion throughout each piece. This album offers the perfect sound for a Monday drive home after a three-night renegade campout in the woods, creating an excellent come-down back to reality. *Praxis*

**INTEX SYSTEMS  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Covert Operations/UK/CD  
James Clements is known for his innovative and nuanced drum & bass releases under the name ASC. But as Intex Systems, all bets are off. You might find a hint of D&B within these 18 tracks, but *Research and Development* is by no means a dance record. Instead, breakbbeat elements seem to float in and out like parts of a barely remembered dream, and lush pads give way to ticking beats and far-away melodies, which terminate in effects straight from *Blade Runner*. Reminiscent of Future Sounds of London or early Aphex Twin, *R&D* is an impressive achievement. *Jason Leder*

**JAN JELINEK  
TIERBEOBACHTUNGEN**

~scape/GER/CD  
Jelinek's *Kosmischer Pitch* was perhaps *the* ultimate homage to '70s Krautrock's most expansive psychonauts (e.g., Harmonia, Sand, Ash Ra Tempel). On *Tierbeobachtungen*, Jelinek refines the techniques he deployed there to similarly time-traveling ends. All six pieces follow a similar M.O.: Jelinek painstakingly assembles infinitesimal scraps of sound (analog-synth irregularities, wisps of guitar feedback, warped bells) until they coalesce into epic, ever-intensifying psychedelic collages. In the process, phantom tones haunt his tracks' peripheries, adding to the prevailing mood of momentous, ominous tension. What Jelinek accomplishes here is the sonic equivalent of constructing the Sistine Chapel from junkyard detritus. *Dave Segal*

**KAITO  
HUNDRED MILLION LOVE YEARS**

Kompakt/GER/CD  
There's a fine line between innovation and gimmick, and Hiroshi Watanabe, on his fourth full-length for Kompakt, sometimes crosses it. *Hundred Million Love Years* is the beat-less accompaniment (no percussion or bass) to his previous *Hundred Million Light Years*, an album full of warm, pop-flavored trance. On *Love Years*, Watanabe's layered synths sound lovely but they're without structure and indistinct from one another. The result is a little *too* chilled out. There are moments of beauty, but a little goes a long way; listening to the whole record is like making a meal of cotton candy: tasty, but too airy to satisfy. *Luciana Lopez*

**K-OS  
ATLANTIS—HYMNS FOR DISCO**

Virgin/US/CD  
Trying to pin down Toronto-based vocalist k-os' influences proves impossible. The title of his third effort invokes a similar head-scratching inquisition. Fortunately the disco mention is tongue-in-cheek, for this is an album of extreme versatility (in the greatest definition of that word). He jumps off with his familiar hip-hop patois over the huge beats of "Elektrik Heat," then offers a panoramic view of bluesy chords, rock guitars, and ragtime poetics. Like the flexible acrobatics of Mos Def and fellow Canadian K'naan, k-os brings lyrical depth through a variety of platforms—and on each, he stands supreme. *Derek Beres*

**LAIBACH  
VOLK**

Mute/US/CD  
Like the calm after a storm, Slovenia's Laibach returns after three years with their most mature, powerful record to date. Giving their militant industrial boots a rest, the collective takes national anthems from several countries and converts them into sonatas that summon the anxiety and chaos of today's geopolitical climate. In typical Laibach fashion, "America" is an epic call-to-arms for the proletariat. Tracks like "Germania" and "Slovenia" invoke the subtle electronics of Múm while maintaining Laibach's trademark anthemic, growling vocals. *Volk* again solidifies these controversial icons' position in the history of revolutionary music. *Fred Miketa*

**LES GEORGES LENINGRAD  
SANGUE PURO**

Tomlab/GER/CD  
Montreal's art-rock freaks are back with another installment of weirdness, this time sounding surprisingly normal. Though still infatuated with antics (check "Lonely Lonely" for true absurdity), overall this LP feels less like an art piece and more like "regular" post-punk. Perhaps this reflects a move away from the production-oriented aesthetic of their earlier *Black Eskimo* towards a more live sound; too bad it didn't go the other way around. Though salvaged by interesting moments such as "The Future for Less" and "Eli Eli," by and large *Sangue Puro* seems like a step backwards. *Alexander Posell*

**LUCIANO  
CHILD OF A KING**

VP/US/CD  
Luciano, reggae's spiritual leader, has become an international roots elder much like Dennis Brown or Burning Spear. It's a position he doesn't take lightly, as revealed by his songwriting's moralistic slant. He offers wise counsel to governments ("This One is For the Leaders"), his own community ("Brother Man"), and the world ("So Much Goin On"). Luciano's superb soul-drenched voice makes his messenger lyrics easy to digest while production by Stephen "Gibbo" Gibson, Byron "In the Streetz" Murray, and Donovan "Don Corleon" Bennett ensures superior musical accompaniment. *Child* isn't a masterpiece, but it's another strong addition to Luciano's bountiful discography. *Tomas Palermo*

**LYRICS BORN  
OVERNITE ENCORE: LYRICS BORN LIVE!**

Quannum/US/CD  
Live hip-hop albums are a rarity these days, but if any MC deserves one, it's Lyrics Born. Few have learned how to engage a crowd like the fiery-voiced LB, and the two Australian shows recorded for *Overnite Encore* absolutely capture the energy of his sets. With his lady Joyo Velarde on back-up vocals and a four-piece funk band on the beats, LB tromps through classics ("Lady Don't Tek No") and newer material ("I'm Just Raw") with undying vigor and a ton of call-and-response—as close to a Lyrics Born show you're gonna get without actually being there. *Max Herman*

**MACROMANTICS  
MOMENTS IN MOVEMENT**

Kill Rock Stars/US/CD  
Once a guitarist in Ben Lee's Aussie pop-punk band Noise Addict, 26-year-old Romy Hoffman has suddenly become an MC to watch. Rapping under the alias Macromantics, this Melbourne denizen makes a solid case for why she's "not your average chick." Sure, her breath control could use a little work, but Miss Macro's damn creative. Atop a mix of live and programmed beats, this MC spares the sex appeal and keeps things wildly imaginative—albeit sometimes morbid (see "Eerily Spookily"). Even her battle raps ("Scorch") will have listeners doing a double take. *Max Herman*

**JACKIE MITTOO  
WISHBONE**

Light in the Attic/US/CD  
Studio One legend Jackie Mittoo, whose expressive organ talents made him Jamaica's equivalent to Jimmy Smith, migrated to Toronto in 1971. *Wishbone*, his debut Canadian disc reissued here, cloaks Mittoo's dynamic keyboard in funk and soul, but some songs ultimately suffer from over-production and gratuitous, schmaltzy strings, symptomatic of the time and place of recording. Nevertheless, strong numbers such as "Grand Funk," the soulful "Soul Bird," a re-working of "Totally Together" called "Groovy Spirit," and the atmospheric title track outweigh the weak moments, and the fine packaging and excellent notes add to the appeal. *David Katz*



**WONDER  
WELCOME TO WONDERLAND**

Dump Valve/UK/CD  
Former Roll Deep Crew member Wonder is a talented producer but he could use a lesson in album crafting. His debut LP, *Welcome To Wonderland*, is incredibly front-loaded, crumbling under the weight of its brilliant first three tracks ("God's Gift Intro 2002 Dubplate" featuring raw toaster God's Gift; "Chi Flute," an Eastern-flavored dubstep instrumental; and "What Have You Done," a monster single featuring Kano, which was on more than a few grime comps last year). While that triumvirate establishes a certain energy and ease in switching gears between moody dubstep and anthemic grime, the rest of *Welcome* is typified by less impressive instrumentals and vocal tracks featuring MCs (Bruza, Fraction G) and singers (Mpho Skeef, Gemma Fox) who lack God's Gift and Kano's charm. *Jesse Serwer*

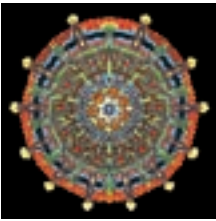




**MV & EE WITH THE BUMMER ROAD GREEN BLUES**  
Ecstatic Peace!/US/CD  
*Green Blues* by MV (Matt Valentine) and EE (Erika Elder) is one of those albums you play before you go to sleep to downshift from the day's hustle and drift off into gently surreal dreams. The duo and their Bummer Road conspirators evoke an ectoplasmic outline of rural blues rather than a literal excavation of it, as the disc's seven long songs blissfully meander over spooky grounds. MV & EE fuse Grateful Dead's laidback country blues revivalism with Royal Trux's portentous acid folk in a reverent attempt to refit these venerable American genres to their own mystical specs. *Dave Segal*



**NOISESHAPER REAL TO REEL**  
Miracle Sounds/US/CD  
Berlin digital-dub duo Noiseshaper has done a lot to make *Real to Reel* more than just a collection of its better cabinet-rumbling tracks. But not even the expert hand of Adrian Sherwood or guests like punk-reggae superstar Ari Up can rescue nearly half of *Real to Reel* from feeling pedestrian and passionless. Tracks such as the Tokyo Tower remix of "Rough Out There," the digi-roots shuffle of "Bushmasta," and the dub balladry of "Wake Up" (featuring Jahcoustix) beg repeated plays, but many others (i.e. "Rise" and "Jah Dub") dance and dub with paint-by-numbers predictability. *Justin Hopper*



**OF MONTREAL HISSING FAUNA, ARE YOU THE DESTROYER?**  
Polyvinyl/US/CD  
With Of Montreal's mounting success, it seems frontman Kevin Barnes is just steps from signing to a major; for the time being, though, Polyvinyl's got one more of his brilliant

noise-pop opuses to call their own. Crafted during a depressing time living in Norway, Barnes tempered his dreary surroundings by writing some of the cheeriest pop of his eight-album career. Tracks like "A Sentence of Sorts in Kongsvinger" rank up there with his absolute finest (despite the sad tales involved), while "Gronlandic Edit" ekes out a space for disco within the pop master's oeuvre. Amazing! *Derek Grey*

**RAFTER MUSIC FOR TOTAL CHICKENS**  
Asthmatic Kitty/US/CD  
It's hard to pin down Rafter Roberts' new album; one moment it's filled with static, the next with mellow strings. It's an indie melange, with guitars, drums, sometimes-thin vocals, and other instruments twisting everywhere. *Music for Total Chickens'* schizophrenic sound is matched by its pace: 18 tracks totaling about 37 minutes. That brevity makes it hard for these tracks to dig into the lofty ambitions signaled by their titles ("hope," "tragedy," etc). Still, there's a sort of fragmented optimism here that gives the album warmth. *Luciana Lopez*

**ADRIAN SHERWOOD BECOMING A CLICHÉ**  
Real World/US/CD  
*Becoming a Cliché* might be Adrian Sherwood's self-deprecating reference to his by-now trademarked post-reggae dub style. The On-U Sound headmaster's second "solo" album again exhibits Sherwood's signature melting pot of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and heavy Jamaican sounds. But it's the sound of 2010: When one is as future-bound as this, remaining rooted in a singular vision ain't a bad thing! That Sherwood's new album is brilliant is no surprise; that his sonic stamp is more noticeable than that of his high-caliber guests (Lee "Scratch" Perry, Dennis Bovell, etc.) might be, but that's okay, too. *Justin Hopper*

**SUBATOMIC SOUND SYSTEM ON ALL FREQUENCIES**  
Subatomic Sound/US/CD  
Even the most perfectly captured recording belies the true spirit of dub reggae. Fact is, the improvisational psychedelic nature of the music is best experienced 10 feet from a massive subwoofer, enveloped in clouds of aromatic greenery. NYC's Subatomic Sound System knows this well, and while they may ply their trade in an assortment of reggae, hip-hop, broken beat, and jungle tracks, each is approached with a maverick, dub-wise sensibility that shouts a clear music-first missive to the masses. The band delivers as advertised, hitting you thoroughly on all frequencies. *Steve Marchese*

**SUBTITLE TERRAIN TO ROAM**  
Alpha Pup/US/CD  
On *Terrain to Roam*, hyperactive emcee Subtitle (a.k.a. Giovanni Marks) drops deadpan wit over hot beats, spanning from Madlib's rich tones to Dntel's videogame melancholy. In between, Marks teams up with labelmate Thavius Beck on the standout banger "Wait for It" and fellow L.A. scenester Nobody for "Write is Wrong," a clever number on which Marks claims, "*Before I go to the DMV/I'm gonna party like I'm crazy.*" Then, on the telling and not-so-glorifying "About the Author," Marks proves he has no need to posture to pen verses that sting. *Eric Smillie*

**TA'RAACH & THE LOVELUTION THE FEVERS**  
Sound In Color/US/CD  
Better known from his Detroit days as an MC, *The Fevers* finds Ta'Raach (formerly Lacks) doing his take on the sloppy but slinky hip-hop production style associated with the D, forsaking the mic altogether to concentrate on crafting tracks like "I Name (E.G.I.G.)" and "Liberation Lullaby" for former D12 MC Fuzz Scoota and Bugz in the Attic vocalist Joy Jones, respectively. Interludes like "F#@k Music" establish a playful vibe, but it's mining psychedelic samples on "Big Bang Theory" and "Hey" where *The Fevers* is at its best, and where Ta'raach is in his comfort zone as a lyricist. *Jesse Server*

**TEAM DOYOBI THE KPHANAPIC FRAGMENTS**  
Skam/UK/CD  
Produced trans-globally between England and Japan, *Fragments* is the Team's third long-player for Skam. Alex Peverett and Chris Gladwin deliver their kaleidoscopic 8-bit style with a new level of melodic cohesion that steps back from the agitated architecture of their previ-

ous work. *The Kphanapic Fragments*, which opens with two gargantuan tracks that run more than 15 minutes each, is a psychotropic mesh of SID-chip acrobatics, hull-pounding beats, and robust digital atmospherics navigating between microcosmic glitch and stadium rock. *Fragments* is so damn good, you'll want to listen to it in reverse. *Doug Morton*

**THE KNIFE DEEP CUTS THE KNIFE**  
Rabid-Mute/US/CD  
The Knife—the Swedish brother-sister synth-pop duo—has become embedded hilt-deep in critical cred following 2006's *Silent Shout*. Now available domestically are the albums on which The Knife honed its edge. The group's playful 2001 debut stylistically pits 8-bit Björk against Kate Bush or Ellen Allien, whereas on 2003's more essential *Deep Cuts* (now sporting remixes and seven videos) Karin Dreijer Andersson—with pitch-shifted/mangled vocals—plays a Nico-style chanteuse raised on Depeche Mode, Ultravox, and Cyndi Lauper. The Knife's electro-haus becomes hollower and icier, even as it becomes more voluminous, paving the way for increasingly effacing, intimate mischief. *Tony Ware*

**THE MALL EMERGENCY AT THE EVERYDAY**  
Discos Huelga-Secretariat/US/CD  
S.F.'s The Mall plays dancey, synth-heavy post-hardcore. Combine that with not-too-hot production, and *Emergency at the Everyday* might seem destined for failure. Fortunately, their songwriting stands out among the flock of today's noisy art-punks. Catchy keyboard riffs and memorable dynamics dominate tracks like "Define Migration" and "Friends and Family," suggesting that the band might be great on stage. While *Emergency at the Everyday* is not groundbreaking, it contains enough good ideas in its 19:50 playtime to warrant repeated listens and to present The Mall as a band to watch in '07. *Josiah Hughes*

**THE RESIDENTS TWEEDLES**  
Mute/US/CD  
Recorded in Hunedoara, Romania, *Tweedles* showcases The Residents as they encroach upon their creative peak. After more than 30 years, the masked collective continues to churn out media-manipulating hijinks, taking creepy samples of church bells and street musicians and transforming them into atmospheric narratives about sexuality and obsession. Throughout the record, the experimenters revert back to their textural side, focusing more on tone and melody, (as opposed to their recent descent into full-on musical detective stories). Given the thought-provoking existential lyrics and soundscapes on *Tweedles*, it's clear that The Residents are still as gripping as ever. *Fred Miketa*

**T.RAUMSCHMIERE RANDOM NOIZE SESSIONS VOL. 1**  
Shitkatapult/GER/CD  
As a recording artist, T.Raumschmiere (Berlin's Marco Haas) wears many hats—not just that trucker job he dons in his promo shots. Since 2000, he's produced consistently interesting minimal techno, *schaffel*, *gnarz*, hip-hop, and ambient efforts. Here he digs 11 tracks—recorded from 1999-2005—out of his archives and they serve as an antidote to T.Raumschmiere's misguided 2005 foray into electro-rock bluster, *Blitzkrieg Pop*. *Random Noize* is for heads who prefer Haas' more cerebral excursions into Porter Ricks-like heroin house, Raster-Noton-esque micro-funk, and glitchy, ominous sci-fi soundtrack atmospheres. Some of his most intriguing work yet. *Dave Segal*

**TUSSLE TELESCOPE MIND**  
Smalltown Supersound/NOR/CD  
Heretofore, San Francisco's Tussle was the answer to the question, "What if Liquid Liquid and Neu! jammed in Lee Perry's studio?" That may be reductionist, but Tussle are reductionists extraordinaire. Masters of minimalist funk and motorik mantras, dons of disorienting dub, Tussle reaches a lofty peak with *Telescope Mind*. The band achieves a fruitful synthesis between psychedelic tone exploration (bells, buckets, bottles, bicycle wheel, and cowbell) and its patented, mesmerizing, Möbius-strip funk jams. The music is simultaneously regimented and free, making you want to propel yourself with unabashed speed and efficiency. And that's a noble thing to inspire. *Dave Segal*

**UT GRILLER IN GUT'S HOUSE**  
Blast First/US/CD  
On 1988's *In Gut's House*, the all-female trio patented freedom in post-punk with their off-time, sporadic drumming, jangling guitars, and eerie vocal moans. 1989's

Steve Albini-produced *Griller* followed the same gothic free-jazz spirit, but with a dark groove comparable only to their contemporaries The Birthday Party. Between the group's bizarre bohemian aesthetic and discordant sounds, these oft-overlooked discs reflect the timeless impact that they've had on seminal post-post-punk bands like Sonic Youth, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and Get Hustle. *Fred Miketa*



**WET CONFETTI LAUGHING, GASPING**  
Rice Bird/US/CD  
Six years ago the words "Gang of Four" meant shit-nothin' to anyone but hack music crits like us and the dorks behind the counter at your neighborhood record store. But in the post-Rapture world, the name gets dropped in press releases for fucking pop records. In the case of Wet Confetti, however, a Go4 mention makes sense—Dave Allen produced the band's rollicking *Laughing, Gasping*, a totally fine, entirely okay, thoroughly passable slab of brooding p-punk that owes as much to the Gang as it does to modern acts like Pretty Girls Make Graves. Not bad but nothing special. *Robbie Mackey*



**YABBY YOU DELIVER ME FROM MY ENEMIES**  
Blood & Fire/UK/CD  
The man born Vivian Jackson completed a three-year trilogy of albums in 1977 with this lush, spacious, devotional dub record. While lovers' rock and big pimpin' were pumping in bass-heavy speakers, You focused his efforts on the Most High, apparent on the rhythmic brilliance of "Judgment Time" and "Zion Gate." Considering a simple re-release would not suffice, the label doubled the length with 12-inch mixes, including a killing toaster tribute over percussive beats on "Jah Vengeance." You's pulpit was certainly demanding, but his fire was enough to make the pews rise with fists raised. *Derek Beras*



**PAUL ST. HILAIRE ADSOM—A DIVINE STATE OF MIND**  
False Tuned/GER/CD  
Paul St. Hilaire has always tried to expand the possibilities of reggae. Since moving from Dominica to Berlin he's tapped into numerous scenes, most notably experimental dub. The fruits of these collaborations are apparent on *ADSOM*, where large bass undertones are tempered by beats ranging from downtempo to midtempo. St. Hilaire draws a fine line between digital textures and raw, analog sounds here, unlike the cleaner, smoother collaborations with Francois K. that helped him break into the American circuit. Guitars creep over the reverberant rhythm on "Little Song" while St. Hilaire's unique, high-toned vocals rise above the heaviness. The entire record continues in this fashion; even on the more uplifting "Jah Won't Let Us Down," Hilaire hangs back on the vintage sound. While muddy, and sometimes choppy, he finds a way to bring light to the shadows. *Derek Beras*



**DEERHOOF FRIEND OPPORTUNITY**  
Kill Rock Stars/US/CD  
Creating fractured pop collages topped off by calliope-voiced songbird Satomi Matsuzaki, Deerhoof gets the spazz tag too often, as if its lush and willfully weird music is just the end result of chugging too much Jolt Cola. But *Friend Opportunity*, the group's more relaxed yet equally complex new record, shows the 'Hoof is just as adept at pacing and restraint. For every stampeding song, where chugging drums build like a wick slowly reaching its end, there are subdued moments framed by blunted beats and Matsuzaki's grandiose coo. The prickly guitars of the 11-minute-plus closer "Look Way" even unfold like a free-jazz soundscape. The departure of guitarist Chris Cohen means less inspired noodling, but Deerhoof has filled in any empty spaces with plenty of rich, moody melody. Just don't call it their "mature" record. *Patrick Sisson*





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# Comp Reviews 1.07



RRRL POWER REVISITED VIA TWO GERMAN COMPILATIONS

**GIRL MONSTER**  
Chicks on Speed/GER/3CD

**4 WOMEN NO CRY VOL. 2**  
Monika/GER/CD



“Women in rock” has become a problematic and weirdly charged phrase over the last 15 years. First, there’s the link to the early-’90s boom of shatteringly unimportant adult contemporary made by girls with guitars. Second, it sounds like “tapeworm in my gut” or “sand in my beer”—“Women in rock? How did that get in here!? What do we do with it? Can we get rid of it?” Wouldn’t we all be better off if we could just say rock is made by rockers?

In a perfect world, yes. But a just and perfect world would never have spawned heroically rocking terrorists like Chicks on Speed or The Slits, so *vive la différence*—as celebrated on two recent comps from Germany.

Curated by Chicks on Speed’s Alex Murray-Leslie, *Girl Monster* aims to be a three-disc survey of the last 30 years of women on the verge. The comp takes an odd tack by including mostly rarities, remixes, and discards—it would seem more supportive to display the hits from obscure acts, not their remixes. The tracks, which come from an inspiring and far-flung lot of troublemakers, are not organized into patterns or legacies. You’d think Murray-Leslie would want to suggest how each generation of pioneers inspires the next, but it sounds more like she put a gender filter on her iPod and hit “shuffle.”

For instance, Tigersushi regular Sir Alice contributes “Super Hero,” a fatally danceable Martian siren song, all rattling feedback and snide French lyrics over a noisy, bluesy punk riff and spooky organ line. It’s puzzlingly set between an Eastern Bloc electro-showtune by CoS newcomer Anat Ben-David and “Plastic Surgery,” CoS’s tribute to “Oh Bondage! Up Yours.” But is the fact that these are all girls’ songs reason enough to put them together? “Super Hero”’s snarl is a direct descendent of Delta 5, represented here with the 1979 classic (and anthologized-to-death) “Mind Your Own Business”—why not put them within shouting distance? Another match could have been Barcelona’s garage outfit Las Perras Del Infierno, who translate a similar snarl and rock purity into Spanish on “Somos Las Perras.”

And for the love of God, what is Juliette Lewis doing on here? “You’re Speaking My Language,” Miss Lewis’ cringe-inducing stab at standard-issue hard rock, just seems entirely out of place, while unwittingly reinforcing the strength of the experimental work included here. “Fom Fom,” an exclusive track stitched together by collagist People Like Us, is one of the standouts—an addictive and completely absurd romp built around a children’s-hour keyboard

riff and a sample of some kind of French sea shanty. The song lopes along, picking up a lurid saxophone, an Appalachian banjo, Alvin & the Chipmunks, some Motown girls, and a stoned Caribbean vibraphone before ambling back into Serge Gainsbourg’s trousers.

Gudrun Gut, who is represented on *Girl Monster* with a recent solo cut and a track from her ’80s punk band Malaria!, has just released Vol. 2 of the *4 Women No Cry* series on her Monika label. She’s trying to introduce lady artists to a wider audience, and if the scope and political charge are smaller than *Monster’s*, so are the rewards. One standout track is from Berlin’s Monotekktoni (a.k.a. Tonia Reeh), whose “Pappeln” is all analog scuff, wintry piano, and vocals that rise from shivery murmur to aching howl. The other winner is Dorit Chrysler, a Theremin stroker from NYC. Her “My Sweet Chimera” sounds like the meltdown in *Ghostbusters*; flutes, Theremin, and a harp fill the city sky with lazily malevolent spirits and it’s spooky and funny at once.

The two collections’ results may be a bit uneven, but they still they make it seem like now is a good time to be *eine Frau* in music—and Germany a good place to release it. *Frances Reade*



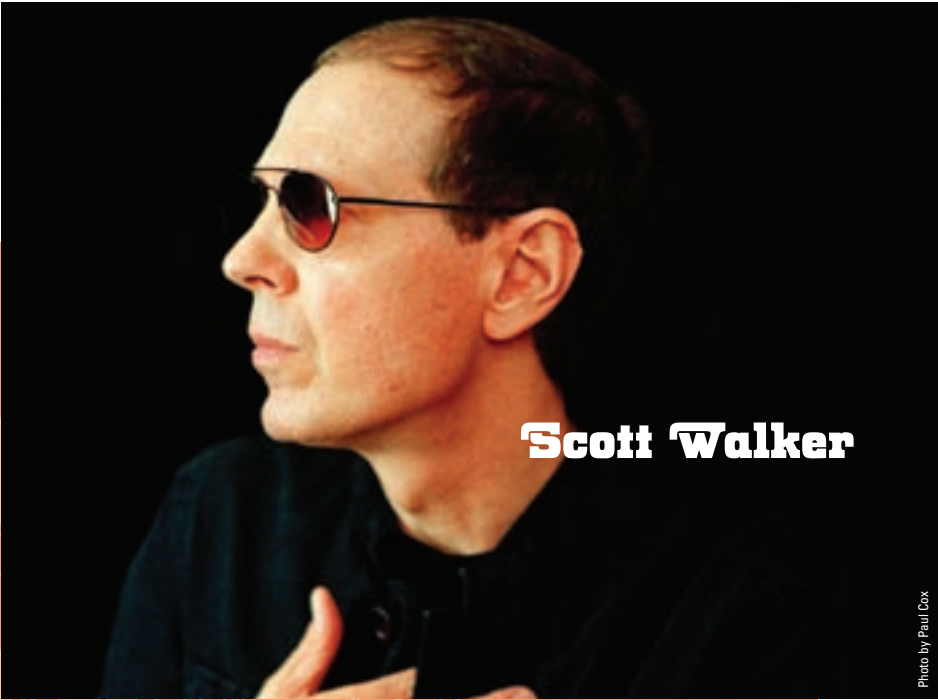


Photo by Paul Cox

PLAGUE SONGS

4AD/UK/CD

*Plague Songs*—an accompaniment to filmmaker Penny Woolcott’s modern-day evocation of the book of Exodus—succeeds on many levels. As a suite of songs by artists from the legendary (Brian Eno, Scott Walker) to the merely brilliant (King Creosote), the 10 tracks, each corresponding to one of the plagues beset by God upon Egypt, are near perfect. From London gypsy cabaret freaks Tiger Lillies’ drug-addled take on “Hailstones” to Stephin Merritt’s Human League-esque dance party “The Meaning of Lice,” each artist’s approach is unique and often frightening. But more importantly, *Plague Songs* does for contemporary art-music what the plagues did for the Israelites: It provides the right setting for the system to be vigorously bucked, allowing everyone from grime MCs (Klashnekoff and his stuttering “Blood”) to milquetoast singer-songwriters (Rufus Wainwright) to set their creative energies free. *Justin Hopper*



7” UP!

Crippled Dick Hot Wax/GER/CD

*7” Up* compiles a dozen singles by obscure UK post-punk bands that heard the DIY call-to-arms in the early Thatcher years. Inside you’ll find great protest songs, comedy, and punchy antidotes to boredom as well as musical and lyrical salvos from future members of The Fall, Public Image Limited, and Pigface. Contact’s “Constant Beat” has a basement-humid groove that’s even funkier than the almighty Gang of Four, and I Jog & The Tracksuits leads a pub sing-along about waiting for something that never happens. The surprise is They Must Be Russians’ lecture on gonorrhea, syphilis, and other delights. *Cameron Macdonald*

CERRONE BY BOB SINCLAR

Recall-Malligator/US/CD

Though the space-tastic “Supernature” and endless groover “Love In C Minor” might rival Giorgio Moroder’s best work, Jean-Marc Cerrone hasn’t been quite as lionized by second-generation disco listeners. Fellow Frenchman Bob Sinclar’s mix CD does its best to give Cerrone his due, updating his late-’70s and early-’80s sounds for modern dancefloors with rewarding results. It’s immediately clear how much influence early ’80s Cerrone productions like Don Ray’s “Standing in the Rain” and B-boy favorite “Rocket in the Pocket” had on Daft Punk, for instance. If nothing else, *Cerrone* is a top-notch primer on the evolution of French dance music. *Jesse Server*

DUB SELECTOR 3

Quango/US/CD

Turn up the bass to set the vibe for this smoking collection of dub-flavored downtempo music. *DS3* starts appropriately enough with one of the year’s finest songs, Boozoo Bajou’s “Take It Slow” featuring kiwi crooner Joe Dukie (Fat Freddy’s Drop). Dukie’s band follows with their brand of jovial, horn-laced reggae and from that point on there’s little doubt that you’ll be roped in by these crucial tracks from Ms. Dynamite, Seven Dub, Sly & Robbie, and Freddy Cruger. This international assembly’s common language is that of headphone-friendly beats colored with classic Jamaican motifs. Make this selection. *Tomas Palermo*

ELASTE VOL. 1: SLOW MOTION DISCO

Compost/GER/CD

Unlike Italo-disco, the slowed-down Italian style “cosmic” was never widely exported, despite its dancefloor-friendly blend of 4/4 beats, synths, and influences like Afrobeat and industrial. Though almost jarringly lethargic, the slowed-down funk and quasi-disco (around 80 to 105 bpm) really grooves. The tempo also gives the tracks a playfulness and novelty, as does the *berimbau* (more commonly used in samba) on the remixed “Mystery Man,” from Clive Stevens & Brainchild. Not everything works so well, though: Love International’s “Dance on the Groove (and Do the Funk)” doesn’t stretch far enough to be interesting. *Luciana Lopez*

ELECTRIC GYPSYLAND VOL. 2

Six Degrees/US/CD

After a wildly successful first edition, this electronic survey of the Balkans is expanded past the realm of Taraf de Haïdouks and Kocani Orkestar. The brass-heavy beats of Eastern Europe are interpreted with great enthusiasm by Balkan Beat Box, Oi Va Voi, Smadj, and, of course, Shantel, the leading producer on the electro-Balkan scene; the hi-hat and kick drum he works into a Taraf dance number adds a tasteful touch. Others are more adventurous, moving into avant-garde territory in their interpretations. A companion CD of originals shows the evolution of the tracks, though both discs are equally fearless. *Derek Beres*

FABRIC30: RUB-N-TUG

Fabric/UK/CD

If you haven’t been to a Rub-N-Tug party, there’s little better incentive to go than this mix, where Eric Duncan and Thomas Bullock show off the killer dancefloor instincts that have made their soirees so legendary. Packed with house and disco, both pounding (“Let’s Get Busy” from Curtis McClaine and On the House) and electro-fueled (“No Exit” by Rufuss), *Fabric30* favors tracks with more to offer than just formulaic 4/4 thumps. The sometimes-uneven mixing zips through 16 tunes and an intro and, while it’s not as good as going to the party, it’s not bad, either. *Luciana Lopez*

JAY HAZE: MINDIN BUSINESS PART 1—THE MINIMAL GRIND

Tuning Spork/NETH/CD

The minimal-techno backlash is well underway, but Jay Haze’s 47-track *Mindin Business Part 1* irrefutably proves that the genre has plenty of juice left. Disc One abounds with the kind of clever, cerebral techno that appeals to the style’s most discerning fans. Haze’s own unconventionally playful productions dominate, and standouts from Fuckpony, Dan Curtin, and Michael Ho weirdly tint the disc with psychedelic hues. Disc Two is a more song-oriented excursion, featuring many of the same characters from the first disc, plus show-stealers Samim & Michal. The adventurous party music holds sway, and nuttiness is just as prevalent. *Dave Segal*

MARY ANNE HOBBS PRESENTS: WARRIOR DUBZ

Planet Mu/UK/CD

This is *the* definitive statement of where bass music stands at the end of 2006. BBC ultra-maven Mary Anne Hobbs has culled the year’s best unreleased cuts from her radio show and collected them for this stunning compilation. The focus is heavy on dubstep (DMZ, Benga, Burial, and Kode9), but long unavailable grime gems (Plastician’s “Cha” and a great Terror Danjah track), outsider dancehall (The Bug with Flowdan), post-jungle jungle (Amit and newcomer Spor), and even dubby techno (Andy Stott) are represented. A real winner from bass music’s most consistent label and one of its most influential selectors. *Matt Earp*

MAGA BO: CONFUSION OF TONGUES

Soot/US/CD

“Challenge the Dominant Monoculture” is world citizen Maga Bo’s credo, and it runs across the top of this mix CD, my favorite of 2006. *Confusion* consists of half original tracks (either Bo’s collabs with MCs or his Sonar Calibrado partner Filastine) and half music from kindred souls like Enduser, Slaughter Mob, Nettle, and Timeblind. He

blazes through it all stunningly—like a next-generation Bill Laswell, he manages to touch on every conceivable musical and lyrical style, reaching across South America, Africa, and Europe, through jungle, dub, and hip-hop. Grab your local ethnomusicologist or corner-rhyming kid and play this for them—repeatedly. *Matt Earp*

M.A.N.D.Y.: AT THE CONTROLS

Resist/UK/CD

Following on from James Holden’s leftfield debut for this series, DJ/production duo and Get Physical co-founders Patrick Bodmer and Philipp Jung preside over an inspired and engaging *At The Controls* session that draws upon artists as disparate as Cat Stevens, Matthew Dear, Kenny Larkin, and Marden Hill without seeming strained or affected. M.A.N.D.Y.’s flawless track selection (they reportedly whittled down a possible 1500 contenders to 36 tracks in what they’ve described as a six-week, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*-like trip) and adept mixing confirms that, right now, Bodmer and Jung are utterly on the money. *David Hemingway*

MICHAEL MAYER: IMMER 2

Kompakt/GER/CD

On *Immer 2*, Michael Mayer moves thoughtfully through the pulse-strengthening flow of Brooks and Frank West before pivoting on a Crowdpleaser to fully flip the funk switch with Todd Terje’s remix of Lindström’s “Another Station.” His penchant for space and texture translates perfectly as the disc closes with the tribal enchantment of Jesse Somfay’s “Lying in a Bed of Myst,” finishing off with his own stratospheric Supermayer remix of Geiger’s “Good Evening.” *Immer 2* is bound to be derided for not breaking new ground like 2002’s *Immer*, but its impeccable selection and pop-savvy execution are Mayer through and through. *Doug Morton*

NOBODY: REVISIONS REVISIONS

Plug Research/US/CD

Given his history in the L.A. underground, Elvin Estela (a.k.a. Nobody) has surprisingly opted to remix very little hip-hop. Even still, this disc sees him successfully place his psychedelic, lo-fi stamp on tracks from artists as off-kilter as he is (Clue To Kalo, Pepe California, Her Space Holiday, et al). But whether Nobody is creating pop-rock from scratch (Clearlake’s “Good Clean Fun”) or adding a little flair to already fresh hip-hop (Busdriver’s “Unemployed Black Astronaut”), his remixes make for a pleasing aural experience. *Max Herman*

GILLES PETERSON: PURE FIRE: IMPULSE COLLECTION

Impulse/US/CD

GILLES PETERSON & PATRICK FORGE: SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT DINGWALLS

Ether/UK/CD

Gilles Peterson again shows off his good taste with his latest releases: *Pure Fire*, consisting of handpicked cuts from Impulse’s legendary vaults, contains mellow jazz buffed up with soulful vocals; *Sunday Afternoon At Dingwalls* features two eclectic DJ sets by Peterson and Patrick Forge at the renowned UK club. Although both CDs include colorful tracks with diverse rhythms and moods, *Pure Fire* triumphs with gems from Yusef Lateef and John Coltrane. So what’s Gilles Peterson listening to currently? Probably something damn charming—like both these releases. *David Ma*

PLANT MUSIC

Plant/US/CD

When the bassline comes in on Mainline’s “Black Honey (Who Made Who Remix),” the lead track from Plant Music’s latest label-pimping comp, there’s enough muck and grime coating the notes to knock you on your ass. Then, just when it’s time to dust off and pick yourself up, Champagne’s fist-balling, run-in-place anthem “Mazatlan” powers through the chaos. Basically, the meaty basslines and wacko synth shootouts don’t relent on this one, leaving listeners in a pathetic heap and speakers buzzing for most of the affair. *Robbie Mackey*

RECKLESS BREED: RECKLESS ROOTS ROCKERS

Wackies-Basic Channel/GER/CD

This minimalist dub album, one of Bullwackies’ most subtle and elusive releases, first surfaced in limited number in 1977, although its origins lie in sessions cut at King Tubby’s studio with the Soul Syndicate band circa 1974-75 (before New York became Wackies’ permanent home). Oriented towards the presentation of bare-bones rhythms, tracks such as “Underworld” and “Reckless Roots” are dub counterparts to material that surfaced in vocal form on *Reggae Goodies Vols. 1 & 2*, while the wonderfully named “Explosure” and “Creation” feature extreme spatial balancing, plus Don Carlos’ exclusive roots vocal, “Prepare Jah Man.” *David Katz*

ANJA SCHNEIDER: BACK TO BACK

Mobilee/GER/2CD

Surfacing just two years ago, Anja Schneider’s Mobilee label has proved a major player on the world’s techno stage with an unfailing style of rave-proven minimalism. Found on compilations from the planet’s top jocks (Richie Hawtin, Kiki, etc.), Mobilee’s unique approach to techno’s most popular sub-genre ignites dancefloors with intricate synth work, chaos-fused grooves, and mind-melting breaks, all with a head-throbbing vibe. Disc One compiles nine carefully selected cuts from the back catalog, while Disc Two finds Schneider blending eight previously unreleased remixes into a time-less trip through Mobilee madness. *Praxis*

SERGE: VINTAGE FUTURE

Clone/NETH/CD

After having made a bright, neon, air-brushed name for himself with the *Box Jams* comp, label boss Serge unloads his first DJ mix CD, a time-traversing primer in electro-disco that showcases exactly what makes Clone so vital. From the big guns like Legowelt and Lindstrøm to classics and rarities from Egyptian Lover and Mike Dunn, Serge’s seamless and skillful contextualizing of old and new dancefloor maneuvers and Vocoder-driven monster synthesizer sounds proves an ecstatic delight. Ultimately, a testament to timeless electronic music. *Brion Paul*



JUKEBOX BUDDHA

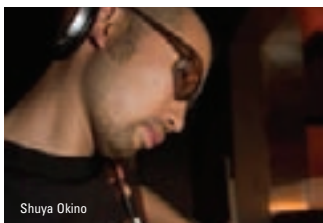
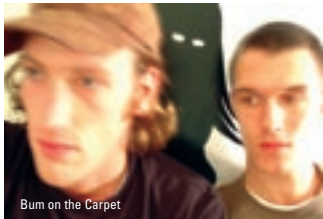
Staubgold/GER/CD

While some cherish the FM3 Buddha Machine for its simplistic, lo-fi preset loops, the 15 ambient and drone veterans present on *Jukebox Buddha* put the little guy in the game, pushing it from an 8-bit chant box into a mammoth tone generator. Folks like Thomas Fehlmann and Sun City Girls push the cigarette-sized box to the limit with hazy soundscapes reminiscent of Beijing at its most serene, but it’s the surprises that make this the quintessential comp for ambient heads everywhere. Sunn O))) disregards their gritty, subsonic walls of distortion for tranquil brutality rooted in a 10-minute ode to cosmic bass. But Einstürzende Neubauten’s Blixa Bargeld steals the show with the fluttering “Little Yellow,” a startlingly pretty composition that (literally) chirps in at just over one minute. Regardless of what the plastic machine might do on its own, *Jukebox Buddha* is an impressive and engaging byproduct. *Fred Miketa*





**Broken Business**  
**By Peter Nicholson**  
FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



What’s in a name? In addition to having a rather classy surname, **Anthony Nicholson** has always been an innovative producer, and a recent batch of 12”s confirms that the Chicago-based producer is still on-point. “Chameleon,” from *The Alter Ego* EP, is a gently broken journey through *kalimba*-like bell tones and constantly shifting percussion, while “Saturday Night Street Fight” has a more urgent bass drum pulse paired with Anthony’s always stellar keyboard work on synths and piano. Also on Nicholson’s Soundphase label is a tight 12” of Afro-jazz in the house from **William Gurk**, who definitely has tons of technique on the trumpet.

Keeping things in the jazzy vein, don’t sleep on the latest from Counterpoint Records, **Marcina Arnold**’s *Introducing*. Coming off sessions with the likes of Hugh Masekela and Mark de Clive-Lowe, Arnold pairs socially conscious lyrics with swinging vibes, like the tropical samba jam “Memory” and the acoustic soul of “Neva Do It.”

Since I’m straying off the strictly broken path, I must give a shout-out to “Hold It Tight” from **Wouda** and **Elsas** (a.k.a. **Bum on the Carpet**). Amsterdam’s finest label, and Wouda’s own, Dopeness Galore, is serving it up on vinyl, and I’m diggin’ both the mid-tempo “Nag Champa Edit” with its super-subdued synths and the strutting slow soul of the original.

While we’re up that direction, Sweden’s Raw Fusion has a monster on its hands with the latest from **Spiritual South**. “Hullabaloo,” a project with Sweetwalker Sleepwalker from Singapore, mashes an out-of-control bassline with raucous horns before heading off on an acid trip, while “Calypso Blues” is a decidedly more swank bossa affair with airy piccolo playing by Graeme Blevin and swell vocals from Andre Espeut.

Every now and then we need a dash of house to keep things moving, and sand-wiched between two more straight-up versions the Candy Smooth Mix of **Candy Apple** featuring **Joy Malcolm**’s “Smile” (Endulge) is a nice taste of jazzy house done right—syncopated percussion to give it some Afro flair, big vocals, and piano to get the hands in the air.

Casanova is back! That’s right, Mr. Sensual (a.k.a. **Vikter Duplaix**) has the appropriately named *Stimulation* EP coming on BBE. The title track is some forgettable, smoothed-out hip-hop, but “Nothing Like the Sun” has a right nice bruk beat with some choice sub-bass and a touch of gospel-style chorus.

Speaking of big bruk beats, I’m absolutely loving the new *United Legends EP 1* from **Shuya Okino** (a.k.a. one half of **Kyoto Jazz Massive**). My favorite Bug in the Attic, **Afronaught**, absolutely goes to town on the MPC; his production on “Turn It Up” features a sinister sheen while **Domu** pairs up with the incomparable **Carleen Anderson** (of **Young Disciples**) for a ridiculously huge soul tune, “Beautiful Sadness.” As if that’s not enough, **Clara Hill**, **Yukumi Nagano**, and **Dego** grace other tracks on what has to be the record of the month.



**After Silence**  
**By Martin De Leon**  
THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Years fade and turntables stay the same age. 2006 may be dead but bizarre rock, synthetic beats, and messy underground weirdness are here to stay. I peeked into tomorrow and found some new kids running in circles to the loud thump of 808s.

London’s **Lily Allen**, one such youngster, is a future-pop lady with rich, lustful vocals and a post-urban ethos. “Smile,” the boppy single off her debut album *Alright, Still* (Capitol), mixes DJ Premier-style drums and a jumpy melody with Allen’s silky voice. Two D&B remixes from **Soundboy** add even more depth to her debut.

Three members deep, Brooklyn’s **Mixel Pixel** has its hands in videos, art, and noisy pop. Their new album, *Music For Plants* (Kanine), displays Blonde Redhead-esque moments on “You’re That Kind of Girl,” where singer Kaia Wong’s harmonies and slow beats only begin to hint at the greatness of this record.

Scotland’s **The Twisted Sad** is also poised for greatness—or at least some tiny bit of recognition. The quartet subtly cites My Bloody Valentine and fellow Scotsmen Mogwai as references for the pretty guitar noise on their brilliant self-titled debut EP on FatCat Records.

Impressionistic beats that would make The Books proud: Portland’s **Long Distance Runner** ain’t no joke. His debut EP, *The Fire of Cumulative Hours* (Existential Sounds), cuts up luscious female vocals (“Los Nihongoristas”) and shows that—along with his full-length album coming soon—he’s poised for big things.

Xiu Xiu friend and morose singer **Chris Garneau** has made this year’s first great album with his *Music for Tourists* (Absolutely Kosher). Slow, heartfelt piano ballads are fragile and touching, such as “We Don’t Try” and “Castle Time,” with its simple cello whine. Google this dude, now.

Of course, **PRE** thinks ballads should die a slow, loud death. The British band’s eccentric yelling and one-minute-man rock is terrific. Their five-song *Treasure Trails* EP (Blood of the Drash) features the

adorable, blazing lead singer Akiko Matsuura.

Philly is great. You can live cheap and form a band like the **Icy Demons**, whose excellent *Tears of a Clone* (Eastern Developments) makes post-rock fun again. They build on folky rhythms but end up sounding like Tortoise with a great singer—which is a good thing.

But California is still where the freaks live. **Hecuba** is an unsigned band from L.A. and they use Casio beats to make their folk into bling. *Music of the Sadness and the Gladness*, their debut album, makes Devendra Banhart look like he belongs in XXL. “I want peace and money,” sings Isabella Albuquerque, trading in hippie values for synthetic beats on “Get It.” Psychedelic R&B is the new sound, haven’t you heard? Check [www.myspace.com/hecubahecuba](http://www.myspace.com/hecubahecuba) to find out more.

Another West Coast gem is Portland, Oregon’s **Wet Confetti**, a modern version of Gang of Four. Go4 bassist Dave Allen even produced the band’s *Laughing, Gasping* (Pampelmoose) album. I also found Brooklyn’s best band: **Telepathe**, a girl-boy duo like The Blow, proves my earlier assumption about psychedelic (white) R&B ruling the school ,with beautiful harmonies and exclamation-point beats. They’ve got a debut album in the works, but you can listen to their singles at [www.myspace.com/telepathe](http://www.myspace.com/telepathe). Apparently, tomorrow sounds like a melting Otis Redding record.



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Kode 9



Maga Bo

It's definitely a strange and shifting time for those of us concerned with digital freedom and music consumption, with DRM, downloads, and MP3 players out the wa-Zune. All I can say with is that when it comes time to fight the corporate and political powers that be, we've got the people's love of bass on our side. The heavy artillery out this month will only help our cause.

**Maga Bo** has an EP out to accompany his superb mix CD *Confusion of Tongues* on Soot, with two of the mix's most explosive tracks included. One is "3akel," featuring the ogre-voiced **Bigg** growling over extremely hard hip-hop beats. The other is the slinkier "Nakhil," featuring **K-libre** on vox, and it fits more into the dubstep vein (lots of zap noises and dubby Egyptian piano lines), although it's got a distinct outsider vibe. The remixes are excellent as well, with ex-Asian Dub Foundation member **Dr. Das** laying a heavy bassline under "3akel," and **Nettle** adding strings and extra percussion for an intimate feel on "Nakhil." A second EP of original Maga Bo material should be out by the spring. Incidentally, Bo pointed me in the direction of a new artist to look out for: Rotterdam producer **Malorix**, whose track "Belsalama," a *rai*/dancehall/breakcore mash-up, is a *Confusion* highlight. More info at [www.malorix.nl](http://www.malorix.nl).

Got a serious blast from the past when **Cory Arcangel** pointed me towards new material from **Paul B. Davis**. Davis and Arcangel were creators of one of the best battle breaks records ever, the *8-Bit Construction Set* (Beige). Turns out Davis is now making 8-bit-style grime under the name **Brains!** A couple of his remixes—including one of the glorious Cassie track "Me & U (feat. Scorchier)"—are on *Vice* UK's first grime mix CD, *Anger is a Gift*. He also has a forthcoming grime/8-bit/ghetto-tech EP on the new N.E.S. label. And if that weren't enough, a 12" is due sometime in 2007 on Planet Mu. Serious C64 crunkment. Check out [www.brainiacmansions.com](http://www.brainiacmansions.com) for more.

Definitely don't miss a couple things on Daniel Haaksman's Man Recordings label. He's starting a new series called *Funk Mundial* and the first release is "Jece Valadao" b/w "Uepa," featuring punk-funker **Edu K** and the silky-voiced **Joice Muniz**, respectively. It's produced by the mighty **Stereotyp**, and it's a banger'n cross between Stereo's slinky dancehall (à la his **Al Haca** collaboration CD) and downright nutty *baile* funk vocals. The series continues throughout the rest of the year with remixes from **A. Brucker** and **Sinden**, **Makossa** and **Megablast**, and **DJ C** still to come. *Funk Mundial 2* will be out in February.

Lastly, the Ammunition catalog has a whole slew of releases on the racks (or on the way). Tempa 23 reaches way back to give **Kode9**, **Benny III**, and **The Culprit**'s "Fat Larry's Skank" a reissue, complete with the long-awaited Kode 9 remix. Tempa 24 contains two satisfying wobblers ("Shattered" and "Tortured") from **Coki**, half of Digital Mystikz. EPs are in the works from **Skream** ("Descent"), **Benga** ("Electro Music"), and **D1** ("Foundation"), and Tempa sister labels Soulja and Dumpvalve will see heavy releases from **Wonder**, **True Tiger**, **Tubby**, **Scratchy**, and the mighty **Wiley** himself in the new year.



**Bass Guest Reviews:**  
**Mary Anne Hobbs**

Remember the good ol' days, when you had to switch on a radio to catch the hottest underground mixes? Fortunately, that hasn't changed in the UK, where the BBC's queen of electronic music, Mary Anne Hobbs, holds court every Friday morning from 2 until 4 a.m. (GMT). She champions everything from old-school D&B, garage, and techno anthems to the amazing dubstep and glitch producers of today; her show (formerly known as the Breezeblock) has left an indelible mark on those scenes are made their artists household names (at least overseas). But with her latest mix CD, *Warrior Dubz* (Planet Mu), she's poised to give the US faction of dubstep a good shakeup, as she and stalwarts Loefah and Plastician are considering a stateside DJ tour in the near future, "with a holiday in Las Vegas, in true rock 'n' roll style," she laughs. Here's what's been rocking the Beeb when Hobbs is on the decks. *Ken Taylor* [www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/maryannehobbs](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/maryannehobbs)

**SKREAM**

**KUT-OFF (FROM SKREAM!)**

Tempa/UK/CD

Skream is a phenomenal, elemental force within the context of this scene. I absolutely love "Kut-off." According to people who have a greater understanding of mathematics than I have, it's built using triplets, but I cannot figure out how he's done the math. It sounds to me like there's one too many beats in every section, but it's just one of these incredible beats that just tumbles and tumbles over itself. Every time you play it in a club it's incredible, because people just skank right out, and yet still you can see they're confused about the pattern.

**DARQWAN**

**M/A..XIMUM REESPEK**

Texture/UK/12

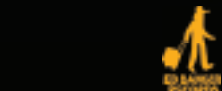
Oris Jay [a.k.a. Darqwan] is a godfather of the sound... He came out of garage and started twisting dark techno and drum & bass influences into garage, and his beats form the blueprint of dubstep today. The next tune that he's gonna come with on Texture is "M/a..ximum Reespek." I put an old-school garage special together with El-B versus Oris. I wanted to them to show the transition from garage to dubstep. Oris made this tune "M/a..ximum Reespek" [*Mary Anne signs her emails "m/a.. x"—Ed.*] especially to end that particular mix.

**ASBO PRODUCTIONS**

**ASBOTOO**

Asbo/UK/12

Asbo Productions have just had their MySpace deleted because they've been flaming people... Asbo makes some of the thickest, most naked, most dark, brutal beats that you'd ever hear, but then they put, like, birdsong or the sound of the ocean in the middle of it... They are quite extraordinary in every way. Beloved by serious bass-builders, their sound is very simple, but it will hit you *so* low. It's a sort of sound that could floor a herd of charging rhinos.



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Mike Shannon



Pascal FEOS

I recently discovered that I am afraid of trance music. You may have already sensed this from previous Bubble Metro installments: I am frightened to death of unknowingly playing a record that some may identify as trance. When I asked a friend who works in a local record shop what he thought about “Subgreen,” the new release by **Extraproduktionen** (Brontosaurus), he said he thought it was good. And even though it had did have some trance-y leanings, I couldn’t help but agree. The Arto Mwambe mix is sort of trance/not trance, and the remaining mixes are earnest without being heavy.

Also falling into this category is the new release by **Martin Buttrich**, *Full Clip/Programmer* (Planet E). It may have a long, beat-less break in the middle of it, but those deep drum kicks clasp onto you from start to finish. Side A is a peak-time killer, with a distinct Wild Pitch vibe to it, while the b-side simmers with muted but insistent 4/4 funk.

Fortunately my fear of a trance planet waned when I checked out the new 12” by **Alterno79**, “GTI” (Hammarskjöld). Yeah, this is good, funky, electro-tinged techno-funk. I can surely see the likes of **Claude VonStroke** rocking the **Groove Rebels** remix on this one.

And if techno-funk is your thing, “Have a Heart” (Kontra-Musik) from **Tobias von Hofsten** (a.k.a **One**) is your tune of the month. As the story goes, Von Hofsten made a trip to the Detroit Electronic Music Festival and was so inspired that this funky three-track joint was the result. Don’t doze off on the broken-beat cut, “kontrafunk,” on the flip—something I definitely don’t have to worry about Goa Gil rocking at a Thai beach party.

For straight-ahead techno this month, I uncovered a couple of fractal-shattering gems; one by **Eclec Sonde** and **Cat Shaver** named *Machinery* (Paso Music) and the other by **Pascal FEOS** entitled *Timeless* (Level Non Zero). *Machinery*’s energetic minimalism is a nice change from the norm, and my favorite from the three-track single is “Stereocleido.” Pascal FEOS gives us one of those tribal-esque bang-outs that samples a well-known early Todd Terry record, in addition to one cut called “The Key,” which works really well as a DJ tool for transitioning between mixes.

Add **Eric Sneo**’s “Confused State” (Equator/Daredo Music) to that list of banging tracks. There isn’t any subtlety here; certainly no bubbling, acidic basslines—just pure maximal techno.

Another one of my favorites this month is **Kritikal Audio**’s “Krupp” (Chillosophy). This record stands out mainly because it is melodic, mellow, and features some occasionally broken rhythms. The title track sounds a lot like what someone would come up with if they put Aphex Twin’s “Windowlicker” on repeat for an entire weekend and then immediately stormed the studio. The remix on the b-side by Minilogue is solid and offers a straight kick for the club heads.

For the minimal purists out there, I’ve got two bombs for you to drop. First, from **Marcel Dettman**, it’s *Quicksand/Getaway* (Ostgut Tonträger-Kompakt); on “Quicksand,” the stronger of the two tracks, Marcel appears to take a tabla and modulate the hell out of it. Finally, there is **Mike Shannon**’s *Hangups* EP (Wagon Repair). The Vancouver minimal label wins again with three tracks of raw, bubbling, syncopated illness. “What’s Your Pleasure” seems to get the most reaction out of people on the dancefloor, so rock it right—late night!



**En Tu Casa**  
**By Nick Chacona**  
HOUSEKEEPING, FROM TECH TO MINIMAL  
TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



Beatblocks



Woody



Miles Maeda

Last spring, the U.S. vinyl industry suffered a crippling blow as one of the main pressing plants, Dunmore, PA’s 33 1/3, discontinued the manufacture of records, leaving many labels scrambling to find a means to get their records out and screwing up a lot of release schedules. One label that was caught up in the whirlwind but pulled through was SAW Recordings, run by **Hector Romero** and **Satoshi Tomiie**. SAW has been championing the more electronic house sound of late, and with upcoming 12” releases from **Dan Berkson**, **Guy Gerber**, and a new mix CD by **Audiofly X** entitled *Undulation 2* (the latter of whom also just released the *4 Play* EP on Get Physical), they are proving to be right back on track and ready to storm 2007.

Japan-based (but U.S.-pressed) Outergaze Records returns with two new singles for the New Year. First up is a new three-tracker from one of Chicago’s second-wave house masters, **Miles Maeda**. *Japanese Babies* touches on funky breaks, quirky deepness, and a bit of classic Italo on the cut “Jet Bass,” which samples the Robotnick classic “Problems d’Amour.” Their next release comes from **Beatblocks**, which consists of Outergaze label head **Jun** and **Tokyo Black Star**’s **Phonon**. “Feeling Like Water” takes a fusion approach to house by mixing one part jazzy keys with one part funk-ed-out Moog lines and adding some serious electronic soul.

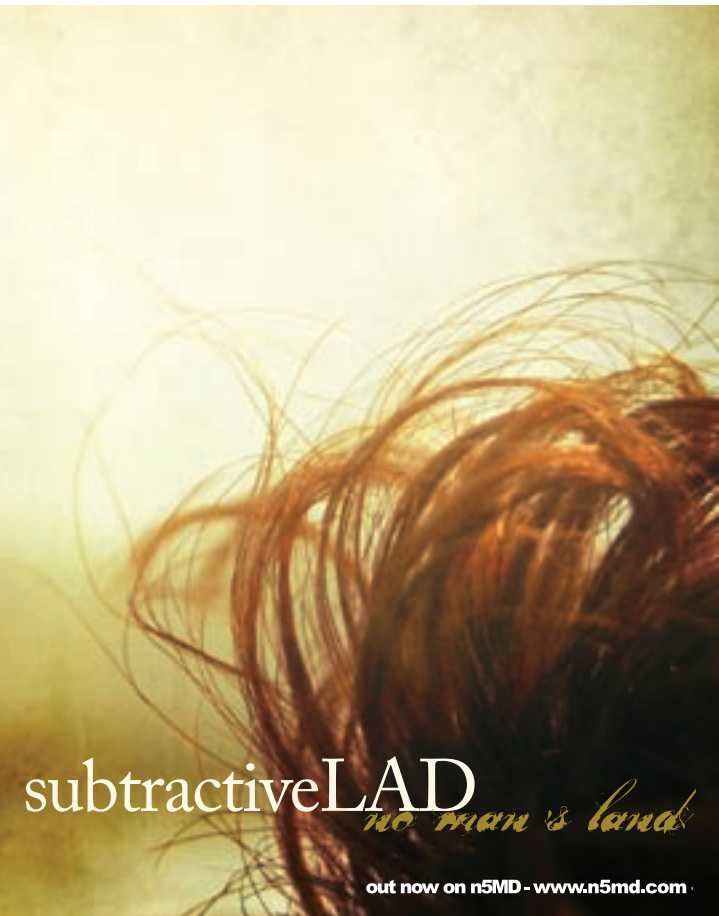
In the bounce-house arena, Britain’s Lost My Dog label keeps things moving with a no-holds-barred party rocker from **Harold Heath**. “Streets Keep Rocking” is further proof that Harold has once again dialed into the formula that he is known for: floor-ward thinking house tracks that are simple, straightforward, and to-the-point.

San Francisco’s Tweekin label resurfaces after quite a while with a back-to-life sampler of sorts by Bay Area bounce favorites **Iz & Diz**, **DJ Buck**, **Hecher & Ward**, and **Home and Garden**. Do take note, though: This new incarnation of the label is unaffiliated with the shop of the same name, which is now run by S.F. spinners **M3**, **Anthony**

**Mansfield**, and **Galen**, whose upcoming single, “Playing Games” (on L.A.’s Utensil imprint), will feature mixes from **Claude VonStroke** and **Rob Mello**.

I was recently introduced to a record that—while not brand new—is so hot that I still feel it deserves mention. **DJ M Buso**’s “Ukukholwa Kuwe (To Believe In You)” (featuring **Shembe**) is listed on www.juno.co.uk as being from the U.S., but the label, Phezulu, is from South Africa. It probably never made it to the U.S., as it would have made a huge splash at the New York stores I frequent. Definitely one to look for if you’re into the Afro-tech house sound.

Speaking of tech, deep is seems to be the direction this season. Just check the super-grooving melodic remix by **Woody** of “Dirty” (Fumakilla) by **Autotune**, who is usually known for sharp, angular electronics. More fine examples of this trend are the soon-to-be-released massive remixes of Holy Ghost Inc.’s 16-year-old techno classic “Mad Monks on Zinc” by **Martin Buttrich**, **Amp**, and **Adultnapper**. Not a single mix clocks in at over 125 bpm by my estimates, and each takes a truly atmospheric, inspiring approach to the dancefloor.



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Read the Label  
By Jesse “Drosco”  
Serwer

HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



Count Bass D



Black Milk

Now that the blitz of A-list, fourth-quarter hip-hop releases has passed, time to dip below the radar and take a look at some releases bringing us into ‘07.

Fresh off his recent LP, *Act Your Waist Size* (Fat Beats), Nashville, TN enigma **Count Bass D** meets up with relative unknown **DJ Blake9** on the *Art for Art’s Sake* EP (Candle Wax). While production duties are deferred to Blake9, tracks like “Missy Prissy” have the sort of folksy, offbeat samples the Count is known for.

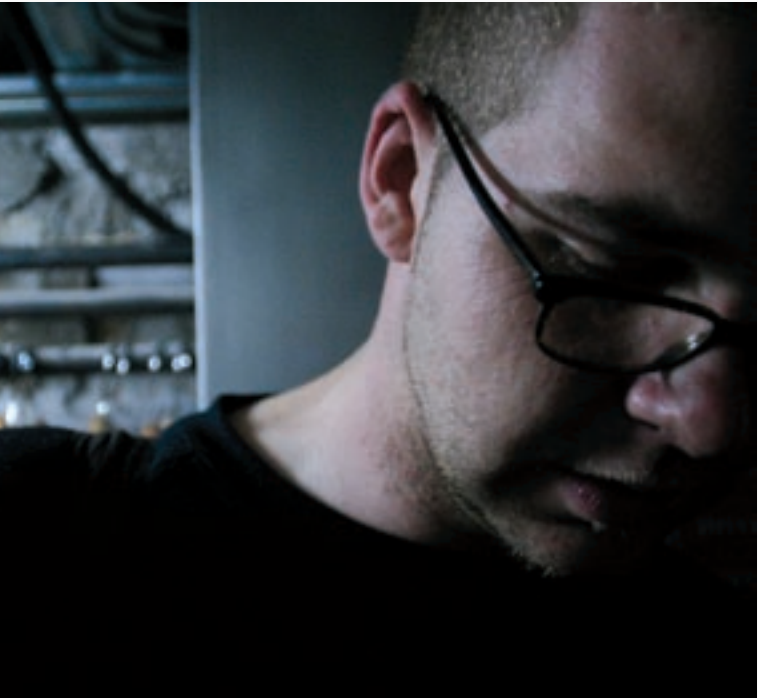
I’ve had a special place in my heart (no homo) for **Sean Price** ever since the “DeJesus” monologue on Heltah Skeltah’s “Operation Lockdown” (best last track on a rap album ever?). I can relate to the guy: He’s perpetually broke, and takes the train everywhere (seriously, take the L or C past where all the white people get off and you might just see Sean P on the snooze). Fresh off the sleeper ‘04 LP *Monkey Barz*, “Cardiac” b/w “Church” (Duck Down) is the jump-off for Sean’s ingeniously titled *Jesus Price Superstar*. While b-side “Church” is a quality collab with Heltah Skeltah bredren **Rock**, the overcrowded “Cardiac” (with **Buckshot**, **Rustee Juxx**, and **Flood**) is okay, though a questionable lead single.

Not to be outdone by his **BR Gunna** production partner Young RJ (whose *Dirty District Vol. 3* earned a rave review here a few months back), Detroit’s **Black Milk** shows he can do the MC thing as well as produce on *Broken Wax: The EP* (Fat Beats). While his rhymes aren’t on par with his beats, “Pressure” and “Keep It Live” are cold bangers, while “Danger” features two of Detroit’s finest MCs: **Phat Kat** and **T3**.

Still hustling on the freelance production tip, Milk also brings the beat for “Let’s Go” (Universal/SRC), one of two singles thus far from **Pharoahe Monch**’s upcoming LP (and one of my most anticipated records of ‘07), *Desire*. After taking things to the left with the gospel-flavored “Push,” “Let’s Go” is a return to straight-up hip-hop territory. While the chorus is a tad trite, the verses are Monch at the top of his game.

Speaking of anticipated albums, where’s this *Cuban Linx 2*, motherfucker? Brooklyn soul/funk band **El Michels Affair** (fresh off a pair of incredible 45s featuring instrumental reinterpretations of Wu-Tang classics like “C.R.E.A.M.” and GZA’s “Duel of the Iron Mic”) has been backing up **Raekwon** at live performances, and now they’ve dropped a record together. “PJs Remix” (Scion Audio/Visual) commandeers a recent Pete Rock joint that originally featured **Masta Killa** alongside **The Chef**; Rae wrote some new lyrics while El Michels does Pete justice, filling out the melody with melodica and vibes. Dre should call these guys.

When it comes to MC pedigree, “former Pitchfork contributor from Canada” is akin to “tax-claim adjuster from Nebraska,” but Edmonton MC/producer **Cadence Weapon** (real name: Rollie Pemberton) is no joke. Newly released in the US, though out for nearly two years in Canada, “Sharks” (from his *Breaking Kayfabe* LP) has one of the more innovative beats I’ve heard in a while, with minimalist 808-ish clicks periodically washed over by grime-y synths and videogame-style robotics. The b-side features spot-on remixes from fellow Canuck **Ghislain Poirier** and **The Russian Futurists**. Now, if only Nick Sylvester would voice the Chinkuzi riddim.



Hip-Hop Guest Reviews:  
DJ Eleven

The Local 1200 DJs have always been a staple on the Bay Area scene, and regardless of the fact that DJ Eleven has moved to New York, his affinity for all things Oaktown still holds strong. Eleven’s latest mixtape with Matthew Africa, *Dirty Raps: The Best of Too Short*, surveys the Short Dawg’s sprawling discography, and next on tap is a similar sampling of Public Enemy hits. But outside of the mixtape game, you can catch Eleven and The Rub teammate DJ Ayres holding it down on East Village Radio Fridays from 6 until 8 p.m. (EST) or at numerous Rub events on the East Coast. Here’s a quick taste of what you can expect to hear. *Derek Grey*  
[www.djeleven.com](http://www.djeleven.com), [www.eastvillageradio.com](http://www.eastvillageradio.com)

THE CATARACS  
BLUEBERRY AFGHANI

independent/US/CD-R  
The brains and brawn behind The Cataracs, Cyrano and Campa, are barely legal. No joke. They’re 18. Go find their album *Techno-Hop*. Lurk on [www.myspace.com/cataracs](http://www.myspace.com/cataracs). Maybe if you stalk them long enough, you’ll get to check out “I’m a Star,” “Gumdrops,” or another exclusive joint before they pop up on what’s sure to be a huge major-label debut.

UNK FEAT. OUTKAST & JIM JONES  
WALK IT OUT

Koch/US/12  
My Rub brethren and I recently played at the Brooklyn Museum’s monthly free party. When my partner Ayres dropped this joint, everyone under 16 went *crazy*. It’s not a huge departure from other snap music records but, if folks as high-profile and diverse as OutKast and Dipset cosign, don’t sleep.

THE GAME FEAT. WILL.I.AM  
COMPTON (FROM DOCTOR’S ADVOCATE)

Aftermath/US/CD  
I’m not a fan of The Game at all and I’ve spewed much hate Willie’s way for his BEP crap show. But Dre makes sure Game stays laced with great beats. I can’t front on what Will did here, on Busta’s “I Love My Bitch,” or on Too Short’s “Keep Bouncing.” Dude is a talented producer who hasn’t forgotten how to make good hip-hop records.

FEDERATION  
MY RIMS (FROM IT’S WHATEVA)

Reprise/US/CD  
First time I heard this, I was laughing hysterically and yelling, “They flipped Al B.’s ‘Night & Day.’ They crazy!” On the third listen, I was doing a thizz face and poppin’ my collar, but still keeping it grown and sexy in a smooth 2-step. That’s a powerful record. Rick Rock’s team did it again.

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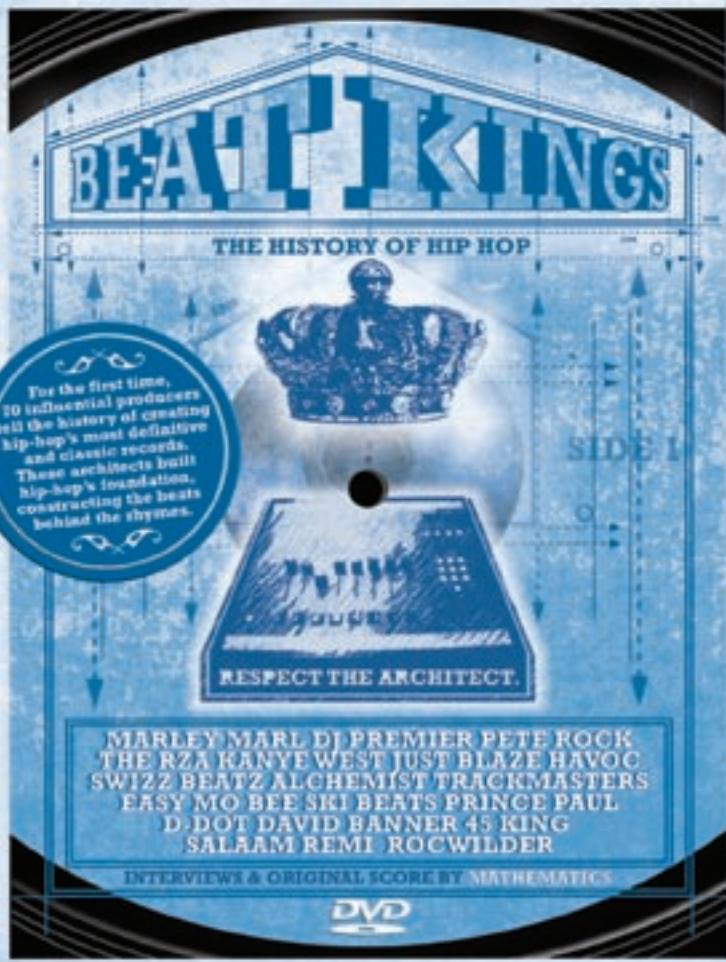
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**Reggae Rewind**  
**By Ross Hogg**  
THE HEARSAY AND DOWNLOW ON DANCE-  
HALL, DUB, ROOTS, AND LOVERS ROCK



Superstar producer **Tony Kelly** (of Bookshelf riddim fame) recently joined forces with **Danny Champagne** of Champagne Records on the VIP riddim. Essentially an updated version of the classic Answer riddim from the early '70s, it boasts a big tune named "Don't Dis No Man" by **Assassin**. Another '70s classic gets new life on the Statement riddim—a post-millennial take on the Ba Ba Boom version with contributions from **Jr. Kelly**, **Sizzla**, **Busy Signal**, and **T.O.K.**—but it's **Morgan Heritage** who busts biggest so far with "Brooklyn and Jamaica," an ode to their dual home bases.

You can't think of classic riddims without thinking of the undisputed king of the dancehall: **King Jammy**. VP Records is releasing *King Jammy's Selector's Choice*, an eight-CD set with a superb one-hour DVD with interviews with everyone from **Ninja Man** to **Wayne Smith** and **Josey Wales**. It's an absolute must-have for any dancehall fan. VP also recently released *Nah No Mercy: The Warlord Scrolls*, a two-CD compilation of 40 of **Bounty Killer**'s baddest tunes.

Across the pond, UK label Blood & Fire continues their unbroken streak of masterful reissues with **Vivian "Yabby You" Jackson**'s 1977 Classic *Deliver Me From My Enemies*, wherein the unbelievably crucial original LP is expanded to include seven bonus tracks, including dubs by **Prince Jammy**.

And rounding out the batch of big albums is a new one from **Buju Banton**, *Too Bad* (Gargamel). It has a handful of songs—like "Hey Boy," "Try Offa Yuh," and the title track—that have been released as singles over the past year or two, but it's "Driver A," a heavy, heavy track over the Taxi riddim, that may be his biggest hit in recent memory.

On the uptempo side of dancehall, everyone's favorite junior high student, **QQ**, is back with a big dance song. "Stookie" is the lead track off the riddim of the same name, which also boasts cuts from **Kiprich** and **Delly Ranks**. The Limbo riddim (Birchill) finds producer **Christopher Birch** linking up with his top artist **Shaggy** on "Give U," while **Macka Diamond**, **Wayne Wonder**, and **Voicemail** all deliver solid performances over the high-energy track. And the March Out riddim (Massive B) is heating up dancefloors everywhere with highly rewindable songs from recent Bad Boy Records signee **Elephant Man**, soca superstar **Bunji Garlin**, and **Tony Matterhorn**, who voices the riddim's title track. The soundman-turned-DJ continues his stellar run of hits with yet another track: "Start the Party" (Don Corleone), which appears to be on a one-off (but I'm hoping for a full riddim release).

And finally, what would dancehall be without a little controversy and beef? It seems that **Vybz Kartel** has just recorded a song with **D'Angel**, the recent bride of **Beenie Man** and ex-girl of Beenie's archrival **Bounty Killer**. (Bounty heads up The Alliance, a collection of artists including—you guessed it—Vybz Kartel.) As of press time, Bounty had not yet responded to the song (in which D'Angel allegedly delivers a few less than flattering lines about Bounty). Beenie and Bounty's war was progressing nicely before this development, but it looks like the stakes have just been raised even higher.



**Fast Forward**  
**By Method One**  
EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF DRUM & BASS



If there were any doubt that drum & bass remains vital in today's music scene, a listen to **The Qemists'** "Iron Shirt" and "Let There Be Light" would instantly dispel it. Both tunes are massive dancefloor stormers in the vein of **Pendulum** or **DJ Fresh**, complete with the huge synth stabs and sub-melting bass that will result in a rewind more often than not. But even more interesting is the label that is pushing these new faces: Ninja Tune (yes, *that* Ninja Tune).

Speaking of rewinds, and continuing in a similarly crowd-pleasing vein, jump-up kings **TC** and **Clipz** both have new releases that have been heavily pushed by the big-name DJs. TC comes big with "Jump" (D-Style), which has a hook that people will be threading into their sets for months. It's big and obvious and silly and unquestionably very effective at making people get mental on the dancefloor. Full Cycle stalwart Clipz takes a similar approach on the first release of his new Audio Zoo label. "Download" has the typical big-beat-and-bass assault that has made him a crowd favorite, but the finishing touch is the hilarious "vinyl is dead, bruv" speech that has already become one of the most-quoted samples in recent D&B history. The flipside, "Get Down," is a little more restrained but still crafted for the energetic crowd, with a hook interestingly built around a Jamaican steel-drum loop.

Commercial Suicide honcho **Klute** delivers the goods with a new 12" on **DJ Friction**'s Shogun Audio. "Revolution" will certainly have its fans, with an uplifting ragga vocal and constantly bubbling bassline. It's a solid tune, no doubt, but the flip is something special. Entitled "Most People Are Dicks" (which is, hands down, the best song title of 2006), it's the type of track that would fit nicely onto a sci-fi movie soundtrack, with industrial and tech-y influences flying by at breakneck speed. This is Klute at his most innovative.

Warm Communications is a label that always seems to come out with something a little bit different, and the new release by **Angelzero** fits that description to a T. Both "Paranoia on the Rocks" and the b, "Recess," may take a few listens to sink their hooks into you, but be patient; the crafty programming and abstract funkiness soon win out, making this record a sure favorite. Also innovative is "Night in Tunisia" by **Drumagick** (Vinyl Vibe), which takes the concept of a jazz/drum & bass hybrid to a whole new level, complete with a massive lower-tempo breakdown and horn licks straight off of your grandfather's dusty LPs. Love it or hate it, this tune will certainly never be ignored.

Before I close out this month's column, I want to take a moment to recognize some of the best D&B tunes of 2006. So here's my personal top 10 list for the year, in no particular order.

1. **Klute** "Hell Hath No Fury" (Commercial Suicide)
2. **Big Bud** "Children of Jah (Motive Rmx)" (Soundtrax)
3. **ASC** "The Pursuit" (Nerve)
4. **Break** "Motion Design" (Levitated)
5. **SKC** "Worthwhile" (Commercial Suicide)
6. **Higher Sense** "Cold Fresh Air (Cyantific Rmx)" (Moving Shadow)
7. **Hive**, **Gridlok**, **D-Bridge**, **Break & Silent Witness** "Standing Room Only" (Violence)
8. **Chris Su** "Solaris Theme" (Certificate 18)
9. **J-Cut** "The Beginning" (Fokuz)
10. **Solar Empire** "Flatline" (Vibez)



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Lucky 13  
By Toph One

TophOne can be heard every Wednesday at the Red Wine Social at Dalva, and every Thursday at White Label at Milk in S.F.



E Da Boss & Nick Andre photo by Paul O'Valle



Bing Ji Ling



Greenskeepers

So there I was, spinning tunes at the YSL boutique downtown, digging all that glitz. These were serious Money People—folks who drank pomegranate Champagne and would think nothing of dropping \$350 on a belt. I itemized my own snappy wardrobe: my grandpa's old Penguin leisure shirt; 10-year-old Ben Davis workpants; Puma sneakers (free—for DJing the Puma store). It was a funny contrast, leaving the the yacht-rock set for my man Nate Mezmer's party later that night. We drained a bottle of Fernet and headed to the Lucky Penny for a greasy late-night cheeseburger, where my Pumas and Ben Davis felt right at home, across the street from the bus yards of my youth.

1. BING JI LING FIRE & ICE CREAM  
self-released/US/CD

The maestro is back with his second full-length of sexed-up electro-soul, from the land of free ice cream and naked ladies. Bing tickles the keys and channels early Prince, Mick Hucknall, and Earth, Wind & Fire, while bringing his funk squarely into the 21st century.

2. BIGGA BUSH BIGGABUSH IN DUB  
Lion Head/UK/CD

Strictly limited-edition goodness from Rockers Hi-Fi producer Glyn "Bigga" Bush. From the heavy soundscapes of "Intravenus 1" and "2" to the more trad-y sounds of "Don in Studio 1" and "Roots of Orient," this marks the birth of Bigga's new label, so stay tuned.

3. GREENSKEEPERS "POLO CLUB"  
Om/US/7

Probably the most fun you can have in two and a half minutes outside of whip-its and a quickie blowjob. I love this shit!

4. ILLFONICS  
LIVE FROM THE ROMPER ROOM (THE REMIXES)  
Wonder Sound/US/12EP

While I'll gladly bang these hot remixes of club cuts from Busta and Biggie, the real genius here is Illphonic's remaking of tracks from cats that I'd never normally play—Lil Wayne, Slim Thug, and T.I. And that Missy joint? *Whoeee!*

5. WZT HEARTS HEAT CHIEF  
Hoss/US/LP

On the harsher edge of the "Warm Fuzzy" spectrum, and definitely not for everyone, Wzt (pronounced "wet") Hearts makes some damn fine noise, at times achieving mesmerizing beauty. I recommend a dark, rainy afternoon for a listen.

6. NIGHTMARES ON WAX  
"DA MESS STICKS" AND "THAIH"  
Warp/UK/7

Two peas in a pod of deep, brooding instrumental sounds—and already a favorite at the White Label happy hour at BOCA. Work them in together and bake a nice big cake of winter moodiness.

7. NICK ANDRE + E DA BOSS THE SINGLES  
Slept On/US/12EP

My homies from Slept On Records probably won't be slept on for too much longer if they keep dropping production like this, and snagging vocalists like Bicaso and Jern Eye. And who's that on the flip? Why, it's DJ's Enki and Platum cutting it up with Lyrics Born and Raashan Ahmad!

8. BURNING NEW YORK  
Ginkgo Press/US/book

From blackbooks to bombing to full productions; beautifully photographed, with shitloads of quotes from the artists, this is a valuable testament to NYC graffiti at the dawn of the new millennium.

9. THE FIGUERS HIMNO NACIONAL  
Fingerprint/US/12EP

Two Venezuelan brothers and a DJ from Ann Arbor, MI are The Figuers, and together they make some eerily appealing, live instrumental hip-hop. Lots of Rhodes, live bass, and percussion samples make for a full-bodied sound, so drink some Cabernet and enjoy at a subtle volume. Nice.

10. DOOLEY-O STILL GOTCHA  
Sound of Dissent/US/12EP

Dooley-O keeps it hard and funky, in the tradition of the great Diamond-D. This could be 1988, or 1995, or 2007, and that's a compliment to the timelessness of his sound; just check "Slappin' Stomachs."

11. JRK JRK  
Wide Hive/US/12EP

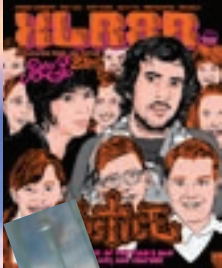
Young producer JRK steps up his game with his Wide Hive debut, showing lovely results with vocalist Jessica Cooke and Neal Rames, but it's the jazzy programming on "Synthetic" and "Signal Flow" that have captured my ear. That shit would have been on Mo'Wax back in the day, alongside Luke Vibert and Shadow.

12. THE MAVS SLIGHTLY SMUTTY EP  
12 Apostles/UK/12EP

While I can't give this one unconditional love, "Dumpweed" is one badass motherfucking song (imagine Bauhaus with Bon Scott and The Streets on vocals), and I'd wager these lads are pretty fun live.

LUCKY 13. THE RUN UP  
Upper Playground/US/DVD

Twenty-six of today's most prominent artists in their own words and in action, including Futura, Mark Bode, Maya Hayuk, Mister Cartoon, and WK Interact. Over three hours and fascinating all the way through.



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## IN THE STUDIO: BONOBO

Brighton's sample master gets down to monkey business.

WORDS: BRANDON IVERS PHOTO: HELEN F KENNEDY

The music press has birthed a great deal of corny genre names, but perhaps the daddy of them all is "chill-out." Totally functional, and devoid of personality, chill-out does exactly what it says on the tin. But sometimes these labels serve a necessary purpose, aside from selling compilation albums—they help launch careers. Such was the case for Simon Green (a.k.a. Bonobo), who debuted in 1999 with *Animal Magic* (Ninja Tune), an album that displayed the kind of chill mastery most journeyman ambient producers spend a lifetime chasing.

Since *Animal Magic*, Bonobo's music has transcended both chill-out and downtempo. What was once made on just a sampler and mixing desk is now done primarily with live instruments. Bonobo has become his own record collection, sampling his own drums, strings, and whatever else he can think up. Here he fills us in further on his organic cut 'n' paste aesthetic.

### DID YOU MAKE ANY MUSIC BEFORE ANIMAL MAGIC?

I was in and out of bands when I was younger, playing all sorts of shit like guitars and drums. But the thing is, there's always a conflict of interest in bands—it's that familiar story. So when I moved down to Brighton, I sort of got into what was going on here with the cut 'n' paste hip-hop scene. A friend of mine introduced me to samplers, and I picked up an Akai [S950] and an Atari and started playing my guitar and drums straight into the sampler. It was all trial and error.

### HOW HAS YOUR PRODUCTION METHOD CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

I play most of the instruments myself—everything except the strings and horns—but it's still the same process... I still use the sampler, but I'm using my own playing rather than other people's records. I just got bored of how I was working—looking for a loop, looking for a break, piecing everything together. I wanted to do something a little more challenging, like really writing music... getting into the science of microphones and recording.

### WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH ORGANIC SOUNDS VERSUS SAMPLED SOUNDS?

I've never had any sort of technical training on how to record things, so a lot of it is making things sound right... especially for instruments like bass or strings. I had one microphone [a Rode NT1]. It was kind of a low-end mic and everything just [went] into that. I don't really have an end result in mind—I just record it and see how it sounds in the end.

### DO YOU LAYER YOUR INSTRUMENTS WITH ELECTRONIC SOUNDS?

It's hard for me to use any electronic sounds at all, really. I'm always just layering acoustic sounds. Like [with drums], I kind of mix it up [by] using a lot of hand percussion and punctuating it with kicks and snares, and miscellaneous bangs and noises.

### HOW DO YOU RECORD? DO YOU GO THROUGH A PRE-AMP INTO YOUR COMPUTER?

I've been using an Avalon [VT-737SP] as a front end. It's a mono vacuum-tube compressor and EQ, and it's really nice... I use it for everything. Then the whole thing goes into [Apple] Logic. With the exception of a few reverbs and some other outboard stuff, I'm doing everything with Logic and [Native Instruments] Kontakt.

### WHAT'S THE HARDEST THING TO RECORD?

I always have trouble recording drums and double bass. I've had great sessions where I recorded a drum kit in a big, shaky room with just one mic and it sounded great... and I've tried it again, and it just [didn't] sound right. Then I've tried the other way where you mic up every drum and EQ it, and it sounded like something from *Baywatch*.

### HOW DO YOU TRANSLATE STUDIO CREATIONS TO A LIVE PERFORMANCE?

When we first started out, we were playing along to the tracks minus the drums, bass, and saxophones. But it didn't really feel like a live performance—we didn't have any control. So we stripped all that away, and it gelled. It was a revelation when we decided to turn off the backing track, and just kind of *play*. That's when it all started to come together.

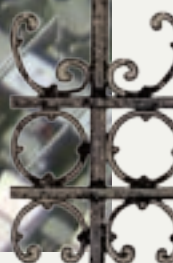
### DO YOU EVER GET STUCK ON IDEAS?

I've noticed one in five ideas never amount to anything. There are so many things on the loop that never go further than that. But I think the most important thing is to stay with the track. Don't put it to bed for the night and expect to see it the same way the next morning. If you're in a current mind state where you know what you want from the track, you can't just leave it and expect to come back with the same mindset.

Bonobo's *Days to Come* is out now on Ninja Tune. [www.bonobomusic.com](http://www.bonobomusic.com)



In Bonobo's studio (from left to right): Logic, Waves Renaissance, E-MU SP1200







Simian Mobile Disco: James Anthony Shaw (left) and James Ellis Ford

## ARTIST TIPS: SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

The punchy screamo disco of Justice vs. Simian's 2004 single "Never Be Alone" (subsequently re-released as "We Are Your Friends") is most people's first introduction to the work of James Ellis Ford and James Anthony Shaw. Once half of the UK band Simian—who melded '60s harmonies and computer trickery into off-kilter future pop—the duo splintered off into their own DJ/production outfit known as Simian Mobile Disco. SMD quickly became known for intravenous dancefloor hits like "The Count" and "Hustler" (both on Kitsuné), and remixes of Air and The Presets, which bodes well for their first full-length this spring. James Ford took a break from producing the Arctic Monkeys' sophomore effort in East London to let us in on his favorite noisemakers. *Julian Haynes*

[www.simianmobiledisco.co.uk](http://www.simianmobiledisco.co.uk)

### 1. ARP 2600 SYNTHESIZER

This is a modular synth that can make all sorts of crazy noises. It's got all sorts of little wires that you plug into the front of it to make different configurations; it's very BBC Radiophonic Orchestra Workshop. The sounds it makes are very '60s, bleepy things that I really like.

### 2. THERMIONIC CULTURE VULTURE DISTORTION UNIT

It's a distortion box. You can just really fry things with it.

### 3. KORG MS-20 SYNTHESIZER

This synthesizer is really good because you run stuff through it—for instance, the guitar. It's got pitch-to-CV (control voltage) and you can get lots of crazy noises out of that. You can sing into it and it can track your voice and the oscillator will follow your voice... essentially, the synth will sing for you. I used it quite a lot on Klaxons' album.

### 4. BOSS PC-2 PERCUSSION SYNTHESIZER

The Boss is a little percussion box. Basically, you can run live drums into it and out comes a strange-sounding synth-y drum instead that's really old and analog-y and spacey. It allows you to capture the human element of a real drummer playing, but get some electronic, synth-y stuff at the same time.

### 5. ZVEX RINGTONE RING MODULATOR

This ring modulator pedal adds two things together, then it subtracts any noises that are the same—the sound you're left with is what's different. Often, that's clang-y bell noises, which are always kind of atonal and fun.



1



2



3



4



5

# SHEAR INSANITY!!



It's true, some companies are more than happy to pull the wool over your eyes. First they shear off important features like track count, then they pass off their "LE" software as the real deal. Need a complete recording solution? They're more than happy to herd you into buying their "professional" system for thousands of dollars more. At Cakewalk, we think that's just bad business. Very baaad.



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# 2007 WINTER NAMM & CES PREVIEW

Every January, the NAMM and CES tradeshows set the stage for the year to come in music- and electronic technology. Here's a sneak peek of what's in store for '07.

WORDS: KEN TAYLOR AND ROY DANK

[www.thenammshow.com](http://www.thenammshow.com), [www.cesweb.org](http://www.cesweb.org)



## RANE TTM 57SL MIXER WITH SERATO SCRATCH LIVE

**MSRP: \$1799; [www.rane.com](http://www.rane.com)**

Serato Scratch Live is taking the DJ world by storm, and the ever-so-smart Rane got in early enough to incorporate the mixing/production software into their sturdy, road-proven mixer. Club DJs rejoice!



## YAMAHA MM6 KEYBOARD WORKSTATION

**MSRP: \$699; [www.yamaha.com](http://www.yamaha.com)**

Real-time control, record-sequencing, and computer integration are just a few of the killer features on Yamaha's new 61-note USB-enabled keyboard, based on their Motif series. Bundled with Cubase, the MM6 rocks.



## KORG MR-1 HANDHELD RECORDER

**MSRP: TBA; [www.korg.com](http://www.korg.com)**

Korg's new handheld records in 1-bit/2.8 MHz WAV and AIFF, with uncompromising clarity and minimal noise. The best part is that it can convert recordings to any bit depth or sample rate with no degeneration.



## CASIO EXILIM CARD EX-S770 DIGITAL CAMERA

**MSRP: \$379.99; [www.casio.com](http://www.casio.com)**

You'll take one look at the credit card-sized EX-S770 and fall in love, but don't stop at its hot exterior. Inside, it captures stills at an amazing 7.2 megapixels and outputs MPEG-4s, AVIs, and monaural audio with the best of 'em.



## PEPPER PAD 3 HANDHELD COMPUTER

**MSPR: \$699.99; [www.pepper.com](http://www.pepper.com)**

Reason #965 to ditch your desktop: The tiny Pepper Pad 3 runs Linux Kernel 2.6, has full Wi-Fi web and IM service, plays all music and video files, has a built-in mic and speakers and two USB ports.



## JBL SPYRO MULTIMEDIA SPEAKERS

**MSRP: \$129; [www.jbl.com](http://www.jbl.com)**

Not only do the Spyros sound hot, but they look amazing (in four different colors), and can wrap around and hang off of just about any fixture in the house. Screw hanging plants!



## LG VX9900 ENV SMART PHONE

**MSRP: \$149 (with Verizon contract); [www.lge.com](http://www.lge.com)**

This sleek and intelligent phone—featuring a 2.0 megapixel cam, internal speakers and Bluetooth support for music listening, a large internal screen, QWERTY keyboard, external memory port, and tons more—will make you the enV of your friends.



## HELIO DRIFT MULTIMEDIA PHONE

**MSRP: \$225; [www.helio.com](http://www.helio.com)**

Helio has been coming on strong with some seriously fun phones, but nothing in the industry can boast the Drift's Google Maps access and its GPS-enabled friend-finder, the Buddy Beacon—a technological breakthrough that's long overdue.



## XTREMEMAC LUNA ALARM CLOCK AUDIO SYSTEM

**MSRP: \$149; [www.xtrememac.com](http://www.xtrememac.com)**

Alarm clocks aren't just for NPR anymore. The Luna features two full-range speakers and a dedicated iPod dock; better still are the aux inputs for just about any device with an eighth-inch adapter. Don't sleep!



## ULTRASONE COLORED ICANS HEADPHONES

**MSRP: \$129; [www.ultrasone.com](http://www.ultrasone.com)**

Ultrasone has proven itself in the headphone game, and the iCans are just another addition to their already top-quality line. Snap up the MP3-player-friendly phones in an array of brilliant new colors.



## IK MEDIA STEALTH PLUG AUDIO INTERFACE CABLE

**MSRP: \$99; [www.ikmultimedia.com](http://www.ikmultimedia.com)**

With everybody recording digitally these days, it only makes sense to negotiate the 1s and 0s with a proper conversion plug—and this is the one for guitarists and bassists. Comes bundled with software and plug-ins, too.





THE MIDAIR IS AN INSTANTANEOUS WIRELESS EXPERIENCE.

## RIDING ON AIR

**M-Audio MidAir 25 Wireless MIDI Controller**  
**MSRP: \$249.95; [www.m-audio.com](http://www.m-audio.com)**

While M-Audio's Oxygen 8 MIDI controller has reached legendary status with its utilitarian simplicity, the **MidAir 25** gives it a run for its money. Modeled after the O8, this wireless bad boy is the live performer's MIDI wet dream, with 30 feet of mobile freedom via one miniscule receiver that connects to your computer with ease. Propelled by battery or 9V DC power, the MidAir also comes equipped eight assignable knobs for parameter tweaking and an assignable sustain button. The raddest aspect of this minimal MIDI machine lies in its intuitive, immediate set-up. While some controllers require drivers, monotonous preference maintenance, and RTFM, the MidAir is an instantaneous wireless experience. All that's left to do is plug in the tiny USB receiver, switch the controller on, and rekindle the spirit of David Lee Roth after the wireless mic was introduced. *Fred Miketa*



## MINI BEATMASTER

**Akai MPC500 Music Production Center**  
**MSRP: \$1299; [www.akai.com](http://www.akai.com)**

Despite suffering several notable casualties during the miniaturization process, Akai's portable, battery-operated **MPC500** remains a useful addition to the celebrated MPC line. First, the shrinking pains. Akai cut a column of trigger pads to conserve space, leaving a grand total of 12. They're still velocity-sensitive and sport that delicious MPC feel, but this leaves just 12 sounds per bank, and folks used to 4/4 across-the-row triggering will have to adapt. The paltry 32-character LCD is disappointing, but less so considering the 4.5-hour battery life, and at just 3 lb., the unit is truly portable. Maxxed out, 128MB RAM/2GB Compact Flash should be enough for most medium-scale projects. Other specs include 48-track, 16-channel MIDI sequencer, 32-voice drum/phrase sampler, 16-bit/44.1 kHz sample rates, and numerous onboard effects and filters. The price is a little dear, but musicians on the run will appreciate the pro-level features and classic MPC interface. *Roger Thomasson*



MASSIVE IS STRAIGHT BUSINESS CLASS

## CRITICAL MASSIVE

**Native Instruments Massive Software Synthesizer**  
**MSRP: \$339; [www.nativeinstruments.com](http://www.nativeinstruments.com)**

The newest addition to Native Instruments' line of soft synthesizers, **Massive** is straight business class: deep electronic pads and rumbling basslines will help make sure your latest production has *an ass so fat*. With arguably the cleanest interface yet seen in an NI production, Massive uses wave-scanning synthesis and plenty of modulation options to make its brand of noise. An easily accessible "macro control" layout lets you tweak the most essential variables to achieve your own sounds; if you're feeling lazy, however, 420 presets have been developed for the package as well. But why you wanna go and do that? *Evan Shamoon*

## WIFI HIFI

**Logitech Wireless DJ Music System**  
**MSRP: \$249; [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)**

It's an age-old crisis: aspiring yuppie rips music collection to MP3s, buys an expensive stereo, then wants to play that same music everywhere else in the house. Ten years ago, that meant carrying a CD to the boombox in your bedroom, but these days we aren't so gauche. Now, we have WiFi-enabled products like Logitech's **Wireless DJ Music System**, which allow us to magically stream audio anywhere in the house. Certainly handy for those dreadful situations where the computer isn't near the main stereo (and vice-versa). In actual use, things can get a little tricky for the impatient—setup requires a good read of the manual, and syncing everything up with players like iTunes or Media Player is slightly awkward. However, once everything is up and running, it's pretty satisfying to use a freaky blue remote to browse through your music collection, all while sitting on your couch. *Brandon Ivers*



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## ON BASE

**Cubase 4 Music Production System**

**MSRP: \$999; [www.steinberg.net](http://www.steinberg.net)**

After well over a decade in existence, Steinberg's classic sequencer was starting to look a bit stodgy. However, with the release of **Cubase 4**, critics can officially drop the "aging" tag and swap it with something more appropriate, like "venerable," or "distinguished." The fourth generation signifies a serious overhaul, inside and out. Longtime users will still recognize the UI, which retains the general look and feel of previous versions. However, the update introduces a vastly improved media management system, a dedicated loop browser, a more fluid VST interface, and a brighter, more intuitive visual scheme. Steinberg paid special attention to CPU efficiency, and claims that the software runs about as fast as v.3—good news for those of us who can't quite swing the bi-annual Apple overhauls. Throw in 30 new VST instruments and effects (plus 20 re-worked ones), and you've got a real gem of an update. *Roger Thomasson*



A HOT TOOL FOR PRODUCERS AND SCRATCH MASTERS.

## BREAK ONE OFF

**Sneakmove Rock Drum Breaks Sample CD**

**MSRP: \$10; [www.sneakmove.com](http://www.sneakmove.com)**

After printing up dope-ass Steven Colbert t-shirts and putting out 7-inches by Restiform Bodies and the like, the guys from blog/label Sneakmove.com bring you *Rock Drum Breaks*, a pretty self-explanatory selection of 21 obscure breakbeats. Clocking in at a total of 42 minutes, each break comes with a BPM value for detailed beat-matching. Are you (or anyone else, for that matter) gonna recognize any of these beats? Hell no. Will the creators of said beats care? Probably not. These breaks were all culled from the Sneakmove guys' garage-sale finds, but they've been skillfully harvested for maximum DJ use, perfectly looped into two-minute samples, nicely mastered, and near impossible to pin to any well-known drummer or track. A hilarious, *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*-esque listen for non-DJs, but a hot tool for producers and scratch masters. *Derek Grey*



PLUG-AND-PLAY ACTION TURNS NEARLY ANY IPOD INTO A DICTAPHONE.

## MEMO TO SELF: BUY THIS!

**XtremeMac MicroMemo Audio Recorder for iPod**

**MSRP: \$59.95; [www.xtrememac.com](http://www.xtrememac.com)**

We record a lot of interviews here at *XLBBB* HQ; so many that my trusty old mini-cassette recorder bit the dust. Luckily, the awesome **XtremeMac MicroMemo** audio recorder stepped in to save my ass. It says it's for iPod with video, but she runs beautifully on my nano, too. Simple plug-and-play action turns nearly any iPod into a dictaphone, despite the attachment's shape (which really only suits the full-sized iPod). But who cares if it doesn't look right? It works like a charm (though slightly quiet for phone recordings), and the adjustable mic pops right out of the 1/8-inch input—great for external mic and line-level recording, and perfect for my phone tap's jack. As soon as I'm finished, I simply connect the iPod to my Mac, and iTunes automatically drags and drops my WAV-encoded audio into my voice memo folder. This piece won't soon leave my side. *Ken Taylor*



## GROUND ZERO

**Novation ReMOTE ZeRO SL MIDI Controller**

**MSRP: \$499; [www.novationmusic.com](http://www.novationmusic.com)**

Attempting to bridge the gap between the feel of outboard gear and the convenience of software, Novation has released the **ReMOTE ZeRO SL**. It's essentially a box for those who already own a controller keyboard but want to get all pushy-turny with Novation's Automap technology, which automatically maps MIDI parameters when you boot up your software or load your plug-in. Two nice, bright LCD screens stretch the length of the unit—telling you which parameter you're controlling with which knob, pot, or fader—and it works with all the major DAWs. While it's not foolproof—this kind of stuff never is, and requires a bit of tweaking along the way—the ZeRO SL is probably the best way to go hands-on with your virtual gear. *Evan Shamoon*





# VIS-ED: JON SANTOS

A GLOBETROTTING GRAPHIC DESIGNER ON LOOKING BACKWARD AND PUSHING FORWARD.

WORDS VIVIAN HOST IMAGES JON SANTOS



If you catch Jon Santos busting a jit at a Manhattan warehouse party, then consider yourself lucky. When 32-year-old Santos isn't holed up in his Chrystie Street studio working on one of a dozen projects, he's usually traveling the world. Case in point: He's just come back from Hong Kong, where he was supervising the printing of an art book he curated on the theme of "resurrection," and Tokyo, where he shocked tastemakers by showing them work he did for Phil Collins' farewell tour. Last year, Diesel China invited him to Beijing to DJ at an exhibit celebrating 25 years of *iD Magazine* (who named him one of the "Top Forty Under 30" in 2000); Santos ended up creating videos showcasing the strides the Western brand has made in the fashion economy of the "new China."

The reason Santos can dance the jit at all has to do with his Detroit upbringing. Raised in the suburb of Troy—but educated at rave parties downtown and in nearby Windsor, Ontario—Santos, also a longtime DJ, got the connection between music and design early on; indeed, much of his work in the last 10 years has been sonically inspired, from album covers for ~scape, Carpark, and Brooklyn Beats to motion graphics created for MTV and VH1.

We caught up with this human whirlwind, and asked him about the process, the product, and the space in between.

[www.commonspace.fm](http://www.commonspace.fm), [www.canary-project.org](http://www.canary-project.org)

## Do you prefer motion graphics or print design?

Since the two inform each other I approach them in a similar manner. I like working on motion graphics if what I am creating is a learning experience or challenges what I already know or have seen. If someone asks me to do the same thing twice, I like to switch my focus to print design or illustration. This is how I keep interested in the work I am doing. Regarding style and aesthetic, I am driven by experimentation; I don't have a preference for particular mediums or styles.

## What did you get out of going to art school?

Before I entered CCAC [California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland] in 1996, I was self-taught. I wasn't there to learn technical skills; I knew that I had to build some kind of a foundation and it was not easy to do on my own. A theoretical foundation, history lessons, my peer group, studio time, and critique were the most important elements of spending time and money on an education. It was only after I graduated that I understood the importance of having an informed critical perspective. Simply having an opinion and knowing why you have one is crucial.

## How did you change as an artist when you moved to the East Coast?

New York is not as colorful as California—[it inspires a] timeless, sort of "universal" palette that is very basic and limited in some ways. Being away from San Francisco for a few years, I can see how strongly that environment influenced my color sense. I work more now with black, blue, purple, and grey.

ABOVE: Collection of flyer designs, 1996-2001

RIGHT: Exclusive for XLR8R Vis-Ed







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

*Native*, 18" x 24", print, 2004

*Untitled*, collection, 2006

*Death Cab for Cutie*, 10" x 24", storyboard, 2005

*Tour Map*, 36" x 48", 2006



I have been looking at photography and conceptual art more than ever. I am collaborating more these days, illustrating more with figures, and making photo collages. I am revisiting installation and video work; the first and last time I exhibited [that stuff] was at the *Bay Area Now 3* show at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts back in 2002. While designing a lot of work for television at Brand New School (2002-2004), I discovered photo-compositing, which has changed my approach to graphics almost completely.

Much of the work I was doing before was process-oriented. Process as content (process as message) was definitive of the 1990s aesthetic in design and inevitably I shared a curiosity about the composition of form; the process of designing a building, programming interactive graphics, computer-based music—and how all of those things relate. I am now more interested

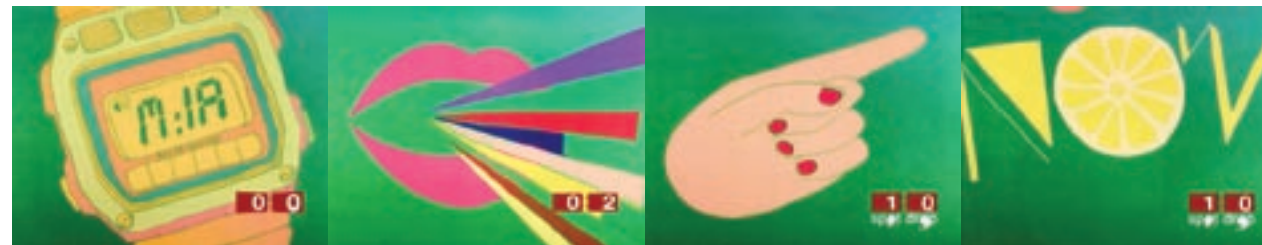
in developing strong concepts and themes in which there is a message and the process remains what it is.

#### What was your biggest obstacle in design and how did you overcome it?

A big obstacle for me was always figuring out what the end result was going to be. I overcame [that] by engaging in the process of creating and learning the end result along the way. Expectations can also be paralyzing. You wonder if people will like the work then you come to understand that the priority is that you like the work first. Also, having friends that support what you do is so important.

#### Tell me about the Canary Project you are currently involved with.

The mission of The Canary Project is to photograph landscapes around the world that



are exhibiting dramatic transformation due to global warming. We will be photographing at least 16 landscapes throughout the world. These images will show that global warming is affecting the world in a variety of ways (melting, sea-level rise, drought, extreme weather events, dying habitats, etc.). We also hope to address something more fundamental that possibly lies behind apathy towards this issue in the U.S.: people's sense of removal from the forces of nature.

#### What music are you listening to right now?

Wire, Hannoda Taku, Can, Deerhoof, mix CDs from Jeremy Campbell and DJ Language, Magda, Alva Noto, JimiHey, Lovefingers, The Field, Magnetic Fields, This Heat, The Voices of East Harlem.

#### What is your favorite memory of your years in Detroit?

There are too many. Hanging out with Nancy Mitchell who I threw parties with and who introduced me to Jeff Mills. Working for Steven, Marke, and Alan from Voom, who introduced me to graphic design and the concept of an "art collective." Learning to DJ by watching Claude Young prepare his mix show at 96.3 WHYT where my brother was an on-air DJ at the time. DJing parties at the famous Packard Plant. Richie Hawtin's birthday parties. The clubs: Bankle Building, The Shelter, City Club, Majestic Theater. 1217 Griswold. All the kids! Driving to Toronto for the mega-raves and Chicago for the loft parties. Detroit was a very under-produced, strobe-light-and-acid, lo-fi, cold warehouse party scene. But, since you were asking me for one favorite, it's the memory of unity and being free!

#### TOP ROW

Services "Element of Danter", video stills, 2005

"D" is for Detroit, sticker for Urban Outfitters, 2006

#### SECOND ROW

iHeart promo card, 6" x 6", 2006

EPCOT, 48" x 64", digital CPrint, 2005

Services Flyer, 10" x 7", 2005

Analog2, 8" x 10", 2005

MIA stop frame (video stills), 2005





# MUSIC'S NEW COMMON CLASS

CREATIVE COMMONS REMIXES THE POLICIES AND PHILOSOPHIES OF COPYRIGHT LAW.

**Words** Derek Beres **Illustration** Colin Strandberg

In his book *Free Culture*, Lawrence Lessig examined the demise of the public domain through continuous copyright amendments, and how the power of intellectual ownership was shifting to fewer and fewer entities. In response, he started Creative Commons, a pivotal copyright licensing system that offers creators total control of their content and allows them to choose how it may be used (or misused) without having to get tangled up in legal red tape. Lessig's move, now a movement itself, is one of the most relevant concepts empowering independent artistry today.

CC's Creative Director (and erstwhile *Wired* music editor) Eric Steuer works on one of the organization's most interesting ventures: the CCMixer remix project. Artists like Beastie Boys, Chuck D, Christopher Willits, and Cibelle have contributed CC-licensed "parts" of their songs for the Creative Commons' grassroots community to remix, thus creating new works. Next in the pipeline: an open-source audio version of Greg Palast's new book. With numerous creator-in-control projects, CC is creating a truly common ground for artists; we asked Steuer to tell us how it's done.

[www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org), [www.ccmixer.org](http://www.ccmixer.org)

**How did you become involved in Creative Commons?**

**Eric Steuer:** At *Wired* I focused on the convergence of technology and pop culture. When we did the issue with the Beastie Boys, CC was emerging as a powerful system for musicians who want more control over their copyright. We decided to put together a CD of Creative Commons-licensed songs. At that point, I became interested in what copyright means to people.

**CCMixer offers interactivity between listeners and artists that is completely new.**

It's amazing what can happen when you open up to people in more than a passive-listener sort of way. We got over 100 contest entries for the recent Crammed Discs project. With Fort Minor, we had 500 entries. That was significant for us... It showed that major labels can use CC licenses and still make lots of money. They're not mutually exclusive things.

**Have you encountered much resistance?**

Initially there was a misconception that we were trying to make everything free all the time. There was this rally cry positioning us as something trying to tear down the industry. It's not about people not being able to make money. There are most certainly many ways for Creative Commons licenses to be applied to commercial

models that make sense for everybody. It's about providing a voluntary system that facilitates a pool of content for people to use and reuse without always having to involve a bunch of lawyers.

**Essentially you're inviting the laws to catch up to the technology.**

We're creating a system where everyone is becoming a content creator—without being a part of a corporation... We'd like to find ways to reinvent things about the music industry that [don't] make sense. If I want people to be able to use my music, there shouldn't be nine layers of red tape.

**The common ground you're finding creates an even playing field.**

The internet provides an unprecedented ability to simply get music out there. While it may make big artists take a hit, [the internet] has created an entire new middle class of musicians. Now 100 bands can sell 10,000 copies of their CD, whereas they would have only sold a few hundred before. That's the future we envision, and we believe it's a good thing. This creates an economy where more bands can at least make some money from their work—not to become billionaires, but to be able to support what they do.

XLR8R (ISSN 1526-4246) is published monthly with bimonthly issues in January/February and July/August for \$20 a year by Amalgam Media, Inc., 425 Divisadero Street #203A, San Francisco, CA 94117. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to XLR8R, 1388 Haight Street, #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.

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